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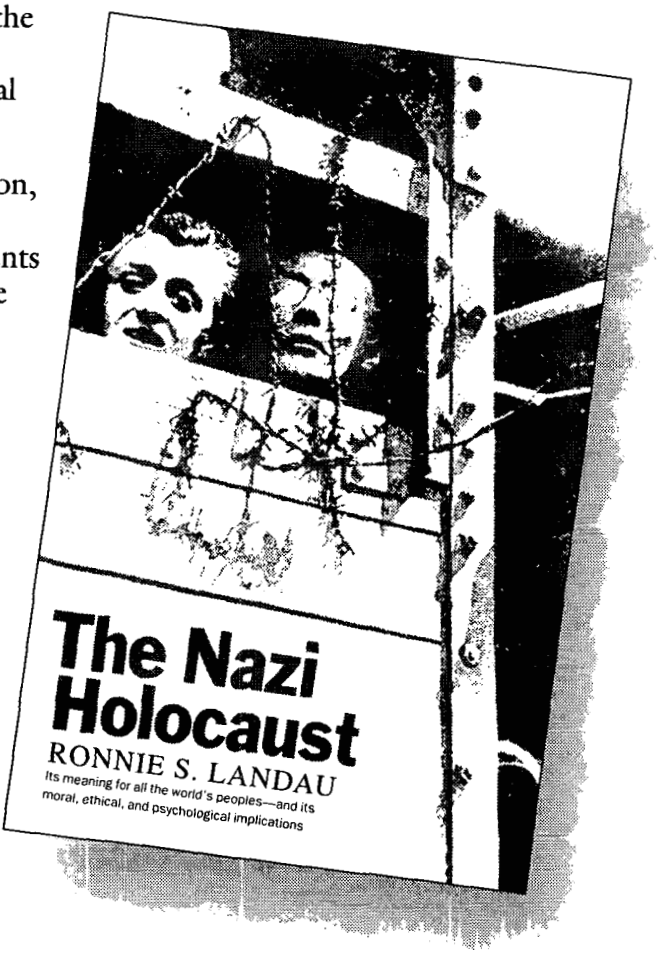
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DISSENT (ISSN 0012–3846), issued April 1994, is published quarterly, winter, spring, summer, and fall, by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions (Canadian dollars in parentheses): $22.00 ($27.50) for one year; $40.00($50) for two years; $15.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $7.00 ($8.75) for mailing costs per year; institutional rate $30.00 ($37.50) per year, $50.00 ($62.50) for two years, single copy $6.00 ($7.50). All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Dissent*, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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• *Dissent* does not engage in lobbying or support candidates or legislation.

Front cover design by Robert Schwartz. *Dissent* is indexed in *Academic Abstracts*, the Infotrak Academic Index. *Magazine Article Summaries*, the *PAIS Bulletin*, University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI), the *Social Sciences Index*, and the *Social Science Source*.

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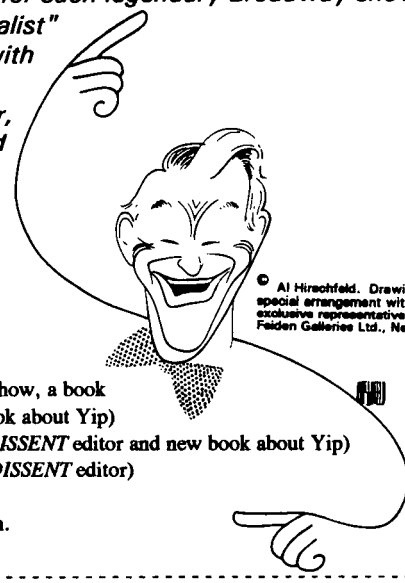

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Editor's Page

I have always believed that the magazine is the crucial artifact of civilized life. Not the book—though good books are lovely things—for it is too solid an object, neither (as we say these days) reflexive nor interactive enough. Magazines are the place where books are tried out, reviewed, criticized, and, years later perhaps, reconsidered. They are home to an ongoing conversation, in our case, a political argument, in which many people participate, in different voices, in different genres. Essays, reports, comments, sketches, memoirs, symposia, reviews, polemics, letters (and an occasional poem): we publish all these, planning each issue to emphasize our "magazineness." "*Dissent* is not a journal," Irving Howe used to say—for journals are only half magazines, half serial anthologies, specialized, monotone.

A democratic socialist magazine should exemplify the values it claims to defend. Its pages should be open, its range wide, its style accessible, respectful of the average reader, its tone undogmatic and self-critical; its authors should always give reasons for their positions; its debates should be comradely but sharp; its coverage should include the issues most important for people in trouble; a rough mix of hope and irony should drive the editors.

In fact, any good magazine ought to measure up to most of these standards, and so we have decided to apply them not only to ourselves, among ourselves, but to others as well. We began in the winter with a piece on the new *New Yorker* and continue here with a critical essay on our sister magazine *Partisan Review*. This will be a regular feature; we plan to add our voice to all the conversations.

In this issue, in magazinish fashion (the word is in the dictionary but too rarely used), we open a discussion of Green politics (edited by James Rule) without a standard tour of the horizon—we just plunge in, joining the most interesting arguments. A set of short articles on health care addresses the problems of marginal groups and the possibilities of civic activism. We print a talk by Katha Pollitt that deals with one of the critical disagreements among feminists today. The lead article in Politics Abroad considers the unsuccessful UN peacemaking/peacekeeping efforts in Somalia and Bosnia. And in the Arguments section we feature an important debate about social policy and the single-mother family.

Though the first of these topics is new to our pages, all of them are perennials; they won't go away; every resolution is temporary. The periodicity of magazines is justified by the way important questions keep coming back—even if their most dramatic returns rarely fit our quarterly deadlines. But the magazine is in decline, people tell me (just like socialism); the young don't read or, if they do, it is the screen, not the page, that holds their attention. Magazines will be superseded by the CD-ROM. Maybe so; but I doubt that the tactile satisfaction of turning these pages will soon be replaced. Nor the tough-minded realism and the intellectual zest of the arguments they carry, which are not yet matched in cyberspace. Anyway, we will be magazinish to the end, and we welcome the double test of the forum and the market. A good political magazine must orient its readers in the practice of democracy, and it must also, most of the time, be fun to read.

—M.W. □

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Michael W. Doyle

FORCING PEACE

What Role for the United Nations?

The twin crises in Somalia and Bosnia have produced a crisis in UN peace enforcement. The high hopes of a "new era" hailed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali have crashed in the streets of southern Mogadishu and the very un-"safe havens" of Srebenica, Gorazde, and Sarajevo. "New credibility . . . rising expectations . . . larger responsibilities . . . and an extraordinary opportunity to expand, adapt and reinvigorate the work of the United Nations so that the lofty goals as originally envisioned by the Charter can be realized": these sentiments, enunciated by the secretary general less than two years ago and actively encouraged by the Clinton administration's policy of "assertive multilateralism," have rapidly become antique.

For many of us, multilateral action seemed the ready solution to a difficult dilemma. It reconciled our advocacy of collective security, universal human rights, and humanitarian solidarity overseas with the need to refocus cold war spending on reform at home. Multilateral action under the United Nations Charter was not only the prescribed legal route to world order, it seemed a practical solution to human solidarity: each nation caring a little seemed sufficient to ensure that all together cared enough. The successful reversal of Saddam Hussein's aggression in the Gulf and the December 1992 U.S.-led rescue of the Somali population from starvation heralded what appeared to be a remarkable partnership. The Security Council decreed; the United States delivered. Others paid and supported. It was all too good to last.

The failures in Somalia and Bosnia have already begun to claim victims elsewhere. Following the October 3, 1993 crisis in Somalia in which eighteen U.S. soldiers died, U.S. senators clamored for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from UNOSOM (the Untied Nations Operation in Somalia). The Clinton administration held out for March 31, 1994. Emboldened by the prospective U.S. withdrawal from Somalia, associates of the regime now terrorizing Haiti chased U.S.-UN advisers from the harbor of Port-au-Prince, wrecking the peace plan. Learning to say "No," the United States led the Security Council's rejection of the request to protect thousands of displaced persons after the recent coup in Burundi. In Bosnia, General Francis Briquemont, commander of UNPROFOR (the United Nations Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia), denounced "the fantastic gap between the resolutions of the Security Council, the will to execute those resolutions and the means available to commanders in the field." The "fantastic gap" now stimulates irredentist claims across Eastern Europe. It signals that borders are up for grabs and ethnic cleansing will go unpunished.

Failures of policy and now a general failure of will leave supporters of multilateral security with few choices. The challenge is how to reduce those humanitarian commitments in the least destructive manner. UN diplomats must discover how to sustain as much humanitarian protection as the UN's member states will support while pushing ahead the UN's peacemaking and peacekeeping role, vital to an eventual resolution of those devastating conflicts.

The October disaster in Mogadishu was exclusively of U.S. management. A secret U.S. chain of command bypassed the UN chain

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of command, which was itself designed to garner U.S. support, with a U.S. retired admiral, Jonathan Howe, in charge.

But in the large part of Somalia outside of General Aidid's southern Mogadishu, the UN effort is proceeding according to plan. Three hundred thousand Somalis died in 1991–1992 in a famine brought about by the murderous competition of the Somali warlords. Today, starvation is not an issue in the areas within the reach of UN protection. UNICEF is assisting 40,000 pupils. Thirty-two hospitals and 103 mobile vaccination teams are active (75 percent of the children under five have received measles vaccine) and 70,000 refugees have returned from Kenya. Thirty-nine district councils and six regional councils have been formed; five thousand former Somali policemen have been recruited and will soon be retrained to perform basic police functions.

Nonetheless, the October disaster (in which about three hundred Somalis also died), Aidid's earlier attack on June 5, in which twenty-four Pakistani peacekeepers were killed, and the fruitless effort to capture Aidid exposed the political bankruptcy of the UN's attempt to enforce law and order on an increasingly resistant population. With the advantage of hindsight, we can identify policy mistakes without which Somalia might look very different today. A more thorough partnership with Somalia's regional neighbors in a mediation effort in 1991, a more extensive mandate for the U.S.-led UNITAF in December 1992, when controlling the weapons of the clans would have been easier, and above all a smoother political transition from UNITAF's partial successes in negotiating with the warlords to UNOSOM's more ambitious state-building agenda could have made a difference. So, too, could better coordination between the effort to disarm the faction fighters (May 1993) and the effort (January 1994) to provide alternative employment.

General Aidid had grounds for feeling singled out. Rival warlords had encroached on his territory in the South, and now the UN was preventing him from re-taking it; he was asked to disarm first. When he attacked the Pakistani peacekeepers in June, UNOSOM's indiscriminate response on July 12, killing a dozen respected clan leaders, made him into a local hero. Then UNOSOM entered a war in which Aidid made noncombatant Somalis the shield behind which his partisans hid. UNOSOM fired back, turning southern Mogadishu into an East African evocation of 1950s Algiers, 1960s Saigon, and 1980s Beirut. Worse still, the UN, founded on the self-determination of peoples, found itself waging what increasingly appeared to be colonial warfare.

The fundamental problem was known from the beginning. Intelligence reports in November and December of 1992 provided an accurate portrait of the Somali crisis. The famine was man-made: induced both by the ravages of civil war after the collapse of Siad Barre's dictatorship and by the extortion of the Somali warlords, who "taxed" relief convoys in order to fund their competition for power. The population was divided into rival clans and united only in their rejection of foreign rule.

The result was that in 1992, up to 80 percent of the food shipments were taxed away. The "technicals," armed jeeps in which gunmen cruised around Mogadishu, were so named because "technical services" was the only line item on the budget of the humanitarian organizations where they could write off the protection money they had to pay. Food piled up at the docks as Somalis starved a few miles away.

Only a Somali "Leviathan" with a monopoly of violence or a "Super-Warlord" capable of playing warlord against warlord could restore order and end the famine. UNOSOM I (with five hundred Pakistani troops holed up in the port of Mogadishu) could do nothing, not even prevent grain ships from being shelled from shore. The UN special representative, Mohammed Sahnoun, valiantly tried to negotiate a peace, appealing to the humanity of the very warlords who ran the famine. In December 1992 the U.S.-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) became the Somali "Leviathan," and the roads were opened and the famine broken. UNITAF met almost no opposition because the mass of the people welcomed the relief—and because the warlords knew it was temporary, no threat to their power. In May 1993,

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UNOSOM II came face to face with the fundamental problems. Its mandate gave it the authority to disarm the factions (the faction leaders had agreed to disarmament at the Addis Ababa Conference in March 1993). But this mandate, unlike UNITAF's, threatened the political existence of the warlords. It proposed the establishment of a Somali national authority elected by the people, sustained by a police force trained by the UN. UNOSOM, however, was a paper tiger, lacking the capacity to enforce the agreement. The bulk of its troops were lightly armed, and the entire force relied too much on the military and logistic backbone of the U.S. contingent. UNOSOM survived casualties inflicted on the Pakistanis in June (its total fatalities have now reached a hundred), but when Aidid attacked the Americans in October he struck UNOSOM's Achilles' heel.

The Security Council now must consider how far to retreat. The secretary general's report of 12 November offered three options, one of which must be chosen before March 31. The status quo, proceeding with the plan to build a Somali state, requires replacing the Americans and others who will have left by March 31 and *adding* another brigade. One can assume that this option is rhetorical. The second involves a retreat to the UNITAF mandate, a force of about 18,500 protecting road convoys so that no region is completely bereft of food. The third retreats to Mogadishu port and airport, to a 5,000-troop contingent and the mandate of 1992, which returns Somalia almost to the level of international involvement that prevailed during the famine. Each retreat saves the UN money and lives, but expands the area exposed to warlord politics and famine.

Opposite problems have emerged for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia. There the United Nations is committed to protecting the humanitarian convoys and the safe areas as well as maintaining an arms embargo over the entire area and an economic embargo against Serbia. But the failure to provide protection to the Bosnian Muslims (also Croats and Serbs), to the relief convoys, and even to the peacekeepers themselves has left the UN force in a most equivocal position. (Press charges of "Chocolate Soldiering" as the UN forces supposedly melt in the face of opposition are particularly disturbing.) In Bosnia alone, over 200,000 Muslims and 10,000 Serbs and Croats have died, and more than a million Muslims and 250,000 Serbs have become internal or external refugees (as of October 1993), according to the estimates of Thorvald Stoltenberg, the UN mediator.

The protection dilemma is real. With more than half the population in the safe areas dependent on UN convoys for food and medicine, military action against the predominantly Serb aggressors would be met by a complete cut-off of humanitarian assistance by those same Serbian forces, which control the access routes.

None of UNPROFOR's military forces are prepared to undertake a massive campaign to defeat the Bosnian Serb forces. The United States limits its contribution to air forces. Its once preferred strategy—"lift [the 1991 UN arms embargo] and strike [against Serb gunners]"—was designed to level the playing field between the Serbs and the poorly equipped Muslims. But the United States was never prepared to invest its own soldiers on the ground in a peace enforcement operation or even to ship heavy weapons to Bosnia. Radical Muslim forces from Iran and the PLO were ready to come to Bosnia's aid but they were prevented from doing so by Russia and, it seemed to many observers, would have merely widened the fighting to Kosovo, Macedonia, and even beyond. The resulting strategy—"constrict [the level of violence] and contain"—is not without costs to its European proponents. UNPROFOR, with large contingents of British and French troops, has already sustained fifty-seven fatalities. But the strategy has one great advantage. The killing so far has been contained within Croatia and Bosnia.

Again, with hindsight, we can see many mistakes. The Security Council foists mandates (without the means to implement them) on the UN forces in the field. Resolutions are issued that bear on the Bosnian Serbs, but pressure on

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the Bosnian Serbs, such as it is, comes from the indirect effects of the misery that the UN economic embargo inflicts on the Serbian public. In retrospect, the UN Protected Areas in Croatia lacked adequate buffer zones between Croats and Serbs and did not have sufficient peacekeepers, providing the Serbs with excuses not to disarm and the Croats with the opportunity to engage in incursions. In Bosnia, the Safe Havens were much too small, allowing for Serb shelling, sniping, and mortaring, and they lacked wide connecting corridors.

The taproot of error, however, lies with the diplomats. Cyrus Vance's warnings in December 1991 not to recognize the independence of Croatia and Bosnia outside of the framework of an overall settlement ring devastatingly true. The only separable parts of Yugoslavia immediately recognizable as independent, sovereign nation states were Slovenia and (arguably) Macedonia. For Serbs, the federal unity of "Yugoslavia" was what made "small" Serbia tolerable and the non-Serb governments of Croatia and Bosnia safe for their Serbs. For Croats, the inclusion of Bosnia in Yugoslavia was what made Bosnia safe for its Croats. For Bosnian Muslims, the inclusion of Croatia in Yugoslavia was what made Bosnia safe; otherwise it would have been overwhelmed by the Serbs. Croatia could have been partitioned between Croats and Serbs, but the ethnic mix was too intimate in Bosnia to allow a peaceable partition. Ethnic cleansing, with all its horrors, followed from the premature recognition of Croatia.

The humanitarian convoys have saved untold thousands, but they also fed the armies and prolonged the war. The current peace on offer to the Bosnian Muslims is the only game in town. Trisecting Bosnia into Serb, Muslim, and Croat entities and condoning the ethnic cleansing of the past year and a half have been well described by Lord Owen, the European Community mediator, as "the peace made in hell."

Old precepts, painfully learned, from the early days of UN peacekeeping seem newly relevant. First, the international community must try to achieve a comprehensive agreed upon peace among all the parties. Given the historic animosities of Yugoslavia, for example, recognizing the sovereignty and existing borders of Croatia and Bosnia without an overall settlement crassly denied legitimate Serb claims to national identity and personal security. In Somalia, we learned that neither the UN nor any other outside body can reconstruct coercively the legitimacy and effectiveness of states that have failed.

Failed states, such as the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, have often been the victims of partition or imperial rule. Unlike the usual partitioners—great powers who impose their will by force—the UN must insist on all-round consent and worry about the precedents such actions will set. Unlike imperial rulers, UN peacekeeping operations have rapid self-determination as their goal. But self-determination must have indigenous roots. In failed states, these roots seem to take at least a generation or so of indigenous order and political success to nurture. Moreover, they often grow in distorted ways in reaction to foreign, imperial, law and order. Even the most well-meaning outside body, the UN, cannot bring about stable national solidarity.

States, moreover, are rarely willing to invest their resources or the lives of their soldiers in war other than for a vital interest (such as oil in the Persian Gulf). But if states have a vital national interest in a dispute, they are not likely to exercise the impartiality a UN peacebuilding operation requires.

Under these conditions, even the best UN peacebuilding operations are bound to be patched-up affairs, shaky agreements among distrustful parties and elections held in the midst of moderated war, as was the UN-organized election last May in Cambodia. Their justification is the alternative: a return to unmoderated war.

Second, "good soldiering" for peace requires, where force must be used, *minimum* force, especially where noncombatants are involved. The UN should negotiate first; defend itself and its mission when necessary. It is wrong to act otherwise. Military victories

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will turn into political defeats if UN peacekeepers enter into a war with the people they were sent to protect. National governments, moreover, will refuse to have the blood of their soldiers shed for foreign causes, however just.

Still, the UN will find it difficult to stay out of violent civil conflicts. Simple prudence will keep it out of the affairs of powerful states, unless countering international aggression—the UN's first purpose—mobilizes the world community as it did against Iraq. For the most part powerful states will be free, as they always have been, to oppress their populations as they see fit. Elsewhere the UN's further purposes—to defend human rights and promote social progress—will be heard. Humanitarian needs will not wait upon the agreement of all the parties, and even an agreed peace will often fail (as the Addis Ababa agreement among the Somali factions did). The scale of human suffering if the UN abandons its humanitarian effort may leave no choice but slogging on.

With popular support, superior force, and the diplomatic engagement of the international community, "peace enforcement" may then seek to create and defend a narrow corridor of continuing humanitarian support as it has in Bosnia; this will probably be the outcome in Somalia come March. It may, on the other hand, create a partial peace (as might now be done in Somalia outside Mogadishu) as a holding operation to a slowly expanding wider peace.

Peace cannot be forced. It must be negotiated. The UN can try to feed the hungry and protect those driven from their homes until warring parties can be induced to make their own peace. These are the thin hopes that sustain UN efforts. They are also still the best hopes the international community has.

(*January 1994*) □

Ian Shapiro

LETTER FROM SOUTH AFRICA

These are heady times here, in many ways reminiscent of the period following the referendum almost two years ago. Then, as now, the white minority had taken an inexorable step in the direction of turning power over to the majority. Two-thirds of the white electorate had voted to authorize the government to negotiate the apartheid regime out of existence. The government had won decisive majorities in every region of the country, and it seemed as if anything was possible. Multiparty roundtable negotiations to draw up an interim constitution made rapid progress. Difficulties set in as groups opposed to a settlement fomented violence, culminating in the massacre at Boipatong that precipitated the collapse of the roundtable negotiations. Bipartisan negotiations between the government and the ANC (African National Congress) soon began again, however, as leaders in both parties realized that the risks of failing to reach a settlement outweighed those posed by reaching one. The result was the interim constitution adopted by parliament just before Christmas of 1993 in the run up to the multiracial elections scheduled for April 1994.

Once again the possibilities seem heartening. True, some of the principal players have not signed on to the present accord and threaten to disrupt the elections. But the leadership of the

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government and the ANC have displayed consummate skill—and benefited from some good luck—in coopting and dividing potential opposition to the transition. Much has been said in the Western press about the failure to get Inkatha and the right-wing Afrikaners on board. Less has been said about what has been achieved. In a major reversal, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC—perhaps best known in the West for its slogan: "One settler, one bullet!") has suspended its armed struggle and decided to take part in the elections. The PAC may win a substantial portion of the rural vote and might even hold the balance of power in some regions. Inkatha is deeply divided as to whether to participate in elections in which their own polls suggest that it can expect to receive only about 8 percent of the vote. Its current stand against participation may fracture the organization or, perhaps more likely, relegate it to political obscurity once elections are held. The National party/ANC coalition has exploited these divisions, releasing documents that reveal plans for racial genocide in the Orange Free State by right-wing Afrikaners. These documents make it undeniable that the so-called "Freedom Alliance" between Inkatha and right-wing whites is no more than a marriage of convenience, and their release makes it unlikely that the alliance can hold together, given the divergent and incompatible interests of its members.

The Transitional Executive Council, a multiparty body created to oversee the actions of the government in the approach to the elections, is an intelligently conceived institution that, it is hoped, will make the transition a *fait accompli* by the time the elections are held. Its gradual accretion of power should mean that disrupting the elections through violence will appear increasingly pointless to groups that are inclined to do so; disrupting the elections will not stop the transition. No doubt there is some probability that the transition will collapse in the face of civil insurrection, but every week that goes by without this occurring makes it less likely. Too many people know that they have too much to lose from civil war and much to gain from a successful democratic transition.

It seems, then, that a democratic political order is emerging in South Africa. But what sort of democracy will it be? Through much of the negotiations, when various white and other groups advanced the view that South Africa is unique and needs a democratic constitutional order that reflects the peculiarities of its ethnic and racial composition, Nelson Mandela and the ANC held fast to the view that what they wanted was an "ordinary democracy." This provoked considerable skeptical commentary in Western academic circles, since it is evident that there is no such animal. What was—and remains—principally at issue in the South African debate is the issue of minority rights. Which groups, if any, should be protected from the operations of majority rule, and by what mechanisms? Are territorially based enclaves, or even separate states, justifiable? If not, what institutional devices should be put into place in the new electoral rules, parliamentary arrangements, and constitutional system to protect minority rights?

Although the government and the ANC have insisted on the maintenance of a single unitary state, incorporating the present South Africa as well as the "independent" homelands (artifacts of the apartheid system that were never recognized by any country outside South Africa), the constitutional settlement goes a considerable distance toward accommodating various demands or the protection of minorities and individual rights. Eleven official languages are recognized in the new constitution. This remarkable (112-page) document enumerates inalienable rights of citizenship, freedom of movement and domicile, universal franchise and access to the courts, and robust protections for criminal defendants. This last is a significant inclusion, given the political uses of the criminal law in the past. Children's rights and gender and racial equality are affirmed, as are freedoms of speech, press, and religious conviction and association. The Constitution explicitly affirms the supremacy of the rule of law, to be enforced by an independent judiciary through a constitutional court. The Constitution is a patchwork of negotiated compromise, "a historic bridge," as its concluding paragraph notes, "between the past of a deeply divided society characterized by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on

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the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence." It calls for "understanding but not for vengeance" and "reparation but not retaliation," designed to achieve "reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society."

Inevitably, there are those who maintain that these (or any) constitutional assurances are not enough, insisting that nothing short of territorially based independent states can protect them from an ANC-dominated government. This is the view of Afrikaner separatists, and of the leaders of various black groups who have derived benefits and spoils from their semi-independence during the apartheid era. Reliable evidence about the strength of grass-roots separatist sentiment is difficult to come by. Most polls do not give Inkatha—the only historically black party now clearly identified with a separatist agenda—more than 8 to 10 percent approval ratings. Estimates of how many Afrikaners will try to dig their heels in when push comes to shove are necessarily speculative. I have heard numbers ranging from ten to fifty thousand, which, out of a white population that now approaches five million, is not very considerable.

Inconclusive numbers aside, do the political aspirations harbored by those who reject the new constitutional agreement merit serious consideration? How does one decide at what point separatist political demands are legitimate? Democracies are supposed to be governed by the people; what if some subsection of the people desires to form its own independent nation?

The demand by a minority to be allowed to secede is a special case of the demand for special protection of that minority from the operations of majority rule in an established territorial state. In fact, there is nothing in the theory of democracy to suggest that special protections for ethnic or racial minorities is warranted simply by virtue of their ethnic or racial identities. It is true that in the United States a venerable tradition of democratic constitutional argument guarantees protection for racial minorities. It was articulated by Justice Stone in a famous footnote in *U.S. v. Carolene Products* in 1938. But Justice Stone was careful to limit his remarks to legislation enacted by the majority "which restricts those political processes which can ordinarily be expected to bring about repeal of undesirable legislation," or "statutes directed at particular religious . . . or national . . . or racial minorities." It is only in such circumstances, when the majoritarian political process is directed against "discrete and insular minorities," that the "special condition" is created "which tends seriously to curtail the operation of those political processes ordinarily to be relied upon to protect minorities. . ." Justice Stone's remarks have been taken to be a democratic justification for limiting majoritarian procedures in order to protect minority rights, but only when the procedures in question systematically prevent members of a minority from pursuing their interests through the political system—as when laws were enacted in the American South that made it practically impossible for blacks to exercise their right to vote. In such circumstances extramajoritarian remedies, designed to stop the systematic domination of a targeted minority by the majority, can be defended in a democratic political order. But nothing in the logic of *Carolene Products* entails that minorities should in general be entitled to protection from the results of democratic politics, and nothing in democratic theory does either. Indeed, the great nineteenth-century movements for democratic reform through expansion of the franchise were intended precisely to *deprive* powerful minorities of the powers they had accumulated in the monarchical and feudal past.

The situation of the white Afrikaners in South Africa is directly analogous. They articulate no justifiable reason to believe that they will be systematically persecuted in a democratic state. What is being required of them, and what the National party leadership has agreed to do, is that they give up a monopoly of power to which they have never been entitled. To be sure, the Afrikaners have vivid historical memories of ethnic persecution. Many of their forebears, the Dutch Huguenots,

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made their way to South Africa in the seventeenth century to escape religious oppression in Europe, and the persecution of the Boers by the British in the nineteenth century (marked, among other things, by the invention of the modern concentration camp) is legendary. But there is no history of Afrikaner persecution, or even the attempt of it, at the hands of the black majority. On the contrary, it is the black majority that has been subjugated by the whites through the decades of apartheid and before. That Afrikaners are suddenly proclaiming the importance of respecting individual rights better reflects the fear that the proverbial chickens may be coming home to roost than any legitimate moral claim for special ethnic protection.

Is the fear that the chickens will be coming home to roost credible? If it were, a case might be made for special protection on some variant of the principle that two wrongs don't make a right, or by appeal to the notion that the sins of one generation should not be visited on the next. Again, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history of Europe is instructive. The landed classes opposed expansion of the franchise largely out of fear that the new majority—after centuries of simmering resentment—would seize the minority's wealth and redistribute it to the poorer classes. No doubt this was a rational fear. When the major reforms were enacted (for example in Britain in 1832, 1867, and 1885), this was in a context of working-class revolution that had twice shaken the entire European continent and produced waves of Chartist rebellion in England. Yet if the opponents of expansion of the franchise in Western Europe and North America were alive today, they would be stunned by how little it has affected the distribution of income and wealth there. Democratic politics turned out to be infinitely more complex and unpredictable than those who anticipated zero-sum distributive conflict could ever have imagined. To the dismay of international socialists, nationalism turned out to have a stronger pull on the working classes of Europe than proletarian solidarity in 1914—even in nations like Germany and Italy that had been in existence as nations for less than half a century. Since that time, economically and culturally conservative political parties have managed to sustain working-class allegiances throughout the West that few nineteenth-century radicals (or conservatives for that matter) would have believed possible.

We should also be mindful that the global context is now quite unpropitious for nationalization and ambitious redistributive programs. Communism has collapsed worldwide, and even democratic socialism is on the defensive almost everywhere. These developments have had a powerful impact on South African politics, leading the ANC and even the (historically reactionary) South African Communist party largely to abandon commitments to nationalization and to accept, however grudgingly, the imperatives of market economics. Private property rights are guaranteed in the new Constitution, and the ANC leadership has made it clear that creating a climate attractive to foreign investment is one of its principal commitments; in this circumstance, the notion that the wealth of the "haves" is any more threatened in South Africa than elsewhere in the democratic world over the past century and a half is difficult to take seriously. No doubt there will be political battles over marginal tax rates, inheritance taxes, land reform, and the distribution of scarce goods such as education and health care, and doubtless there will be some downward redistribution. It would be astonishing if this were not the case; South Africa currently has one of the highest levels of economic inequality of all countries for which data are available. The luxurious lifestyles of many whites—which often still include minimally paid servants even for whites of relatively modest means—will indeed fall to some degree. But there is no reason to expect that redistribution will be more radically egalitarian than has taken place elsewhere in the democratic world. Whatever the egalitarian aspirations of the new government, the balance of pressure on it is likely to be toward creating a stable investment climate as a magnet for foreign aid and investment; scarcely a recipe for expropriating the expropriators. In this light, perhaps a more serious worry than what black political elites will do

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with their newfound power over whites concerns what they will do when they discover how little power they really have. How will they respond to the inevitable and massive frustration among their own grass-roots constituencies, once it becomes evident that there is little scope for redistribution and that the government lacks the resources to fulfill even minimal social and economic demands?

What of the cultural aspirations of the Afrikaners, regardless of their overblown fears of subjugation in the new South Africa? Is there no legitimate claim based on the distinctiveness and traditions of Afrikaner cultural identity? The answer must be a decisive no. Afrikaner calls for a referendum on this subject in the Orange Free State among all *whites* (as opposed to a referendum among Afrikaners) signal that those calling for it are motivated less by their sense of ethnic identification than by simple racism. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that elements of this group appear to have been making plans for racial genocide in their new state, as was widely reported in the South African press in late December 1993. That the Afrikaners lack a territory in which they live exclusively and which might supply a natural basis for an ethnic state reflects a reality that Afrikaners themselves created when they had a monopoly of political power. Dispersed throughout South Africa, they manufactured an economic system that is critically reliant on black migrant labor. Apartheid's architects never intended to give up control of the country's valuable natural resources or centers of commerce. There is no credible evidence to support the view that those calling for a separate Afrikaner state today would accept anything less, and, given past behavior and the unequivocal statements that pour forth from the AWB (Afrikaner Resistance Movement), the burden of reasonable skepticism must surely work against them. It would be more reasonable to anticipate that any Afrikaner *volksstaat* would become a staging ground for a war of attrition against the new South African nation.

Other demands for the expansion of regional autonomy, which in the press are often pushed to the point of de facto separatism, should also be resisted. Buthelezi and other leaders in "independent" homelands and autonomous regions face obvious incentives to maintain the spoils of (often highly undemocratic) local fiefdoms in which they have enjoyed decisive control over political office, patronage, and police power. In the past, such leaders have enjoyed political power unencumbered by the inconvenience of having to compete for it in a democratic political arena; they are understandably reluctant to begin doing so. In fact the new Constitution provides for substantial regional autonomy and recognizes the force of customary law in such areas as marriage that are critical to the maintenance of traditional cultures and the local authority of traditional leaders.

The merits of such concessions to traditional ways of life are debatable from the standpoint of democratic politics. The requirements of democracy have always lived in some tension with the institutions that make up civil society. Moreover, the most effective and sustainable forms of democracy are seldom imposed *tabula rasa* by reference to any blueprint or plan. Often they are grafted onto undemocratic institutions and social practices, reshaping them gradually in directions that are increasingly democratic. It will often be unwise for democrats to try to do everything at once, and it seems evident that concessions to customary law and the local authority of traditional leaders were essential to securing the agreement on the new Constitution. In contrast to those who are unalterably opposed to the very project of democratization (who should, indeed, be marginalized and opposed by force if necessary), those who accept the principle of a democratic order are allies whose values and aspirations merit respect. Nonetheless, arguments for the protection of "traditional" institutions and practices from the operation of democratic politics should always be looked on with suspicion by democrats. Too often they are mere rationalizations for the maintenance of oppressive social relations. The clash between "traditional" South African family and kinship structures, on the one hand, and democratic

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values, on the other, will consume much of the political energy of future generations of South Africans. Democrats can be persuaded to put some of these conflicts off for prudential reasons, but not to abandon them. Certainly there is no democratic justification for the maintenance of "traditional" enclaves designed to sustain the arbitrary powers of unelected leaders and insulate undemocratic cultures from the operation of democratic politics.

It is also wise from the standpoint of economics for those who value democracy to insist on the maintenance of a unitary national state in South Africa. South Africa has a highly developed industrial and financial infrastructure and a modern technological economy. We have yet to witness an example of a successful democracy being built in the contemporary world without a relatively developed market economy (though, as the Indian example illustrates, the level of development need not be of first world proportions). South Africa's physical infrastructure manifestly outstrips any in Africa. The roads in and through the major industrial centers are on a par with the best in the world. There are areas north of Johannesburg that were *veld* twenty years ago but could easily be mistaken for Silicon Valley today. The financial infrastructure is no less impressive. South Africa has a modern stock market and banking system, a sophisticated reserve bank whose relative independence from politics is preserved in the new Constitution, highly developed trade union laws, corporatist traditions of industrial relations (with the rights to unionize and form employers' associations also now constitutionalized), and a business sector that is solidly behind the transition and critically reliant on its being successful.

To be sure, South Africa also has substantial economic problems, such as massive levels of unemployment—approaching 50 percent in some urban areas—foremost among them. Low productivity, inflation, an archaic tax structure, and a currency that has been in semi-collapse since the mid-1980s are not far behind. But the solution to theseproblems does not lie in balkanizing the South African economy. If South Africa is going to compete in global trade with the emerging economies of Asia, not to mention the developed West, it is going to have to do so as a consolidated entity, taking full advantage of economies of scale and human and natural resources.

For all these reasons, it is encouraging that the National party and ANC leaderships are doing their best to marginalize groups bent on scuttling or dismembering the transition. Yet it is one of the profounder tensions of democratic politics that the same features of the political situation that give cause for optimism in the short term become sources of misgivings when one speculates about the longer term future. The elite-level pact between the government and the ANC threatens to undermine the possibility of effective political opposition once the period of crisis has passed and the democratic regime—as distinct from any particular government or governing coalition—is secure. Yet no democracy can survive in good health without a vigorous but loyal opposition. Opposition institutions ensure that dissatisfaction is channeled into the democratic political order, rather than become fodder for groups dedicated to the overthrow of that order. Oppositions are necessary also to keep governments honest, and to demand public justifications for what governments do. And oppositions are sites for the organization of alternative potential governments. If governments are to be able to fall without precipitating the collapse of the democratic regime, there must be potential alternative governments waiting in the wings. Without an organized parliamentary opposition it is difficult to see how these can emerge.

The National party and the ANC have accepted the idea of a government of national unity—"power-sharing" in the terminology that the ANC swore it would never accept but did. The electoral system virtually guarantees that there will not be a strong parliamentary opposition. Of the four hundred representatives in the national assembly, half will be elected at large from party lists, the other half from party lists in each of the nine provinces (which will replace the four existing provinces). In addition, seats in the cabinet will be allocated proportionately to all parties provided they win twenty seats in parliament, and parties that win

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eighty seats (or the second largest party if no party crosses this threshold) will be entitled to an executive deputy president. The thinking behind this is to assure significant minorities that they will have a say in government, and so to assure their assent to the new order. But little thought appears to have been given to the question: what kind of democratic opposition will be possible under such a system? If every political force of any significant size is in the government, where will the "loyal" opposition come from? Who will be in a position to question—and have an interest in questioning—what the governing elites agree on?

These worries are fed by another notable feature of the electoral law. This is the requirement that any member of parliament who ceases to be a member of his or her political party will also cease to be a member of parliament, being replaced by someone else from the parliamentary list. It seems hard to overestimate the power that such a system will concentrate in the hands of party elites. They will have at their command the most powerful whip system in the parliamentary world. Not only will it be impossible for dissidents to threaten to change party affiliations, but party leaders will have a powerful weapon to silence criticism within their own ranks.

We are confronted, then, with the paradox that an elite pact is necessary to achieve a negotiated transition from authoritarianism to democracy, yet the elites who negotiate the pact find themselves compelled to so weaken opposition to their democratic venture that they threaten its long term viability. This is the central institutional conundrum that should be commanding the creative attention of committed South African democrats today. It should lead them vigorously to press the view that the interim Constitution should not become permanent (no easy thing, if history is any guide), and to argue, once the elections are over, for the creation of institutions through which the new political elite can be held democratically accountable as it governs, and vulnerable to replacement in the normal course of political competition. This will necessarily include modifications to the electoral system to bring about the emergence of conventional "loyal oppositions," even if this diminishes the extent to which the government reflects every shade of political opinion in the country. It should also include great pressure to democratize the internal governance of political parties, given the power they are going to have in the new parliamentary system. In this context, an American model of open parties, and perhaps even contested primaries, seems preferable to the British system, which is tightly controlled by party organizations and small groups of activists. No doubt there are other possibilities. Whatever the devices employed, the goal should be to create opposition institutions that can play a part in democratic order over the long term. They should be designed to foster resistance and dissent but also to channel it into the regime. Unless this happens, social dissatisfaction will, increasingly, be directed at the regime rather than the government, diminishing the likelihood that governments can fall while the new democratic order remains intact. Effective opposition, no less than representative government, is the lifeblood of a democratic political order. □

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Aliza Marcus

WITH THE KURDISH GUERRILLAS

In The Cudi Mountains, Turkey

Beritan was a seventeen-year-old Kurdish girl with a wide grin and a big gun. It wasn't the gun that worried me so much as the grenades—two strapped to a cartridge belt around her waist. I had visions of an accidental explosion, and I kept inching away each time she plopped down next to me for a chat.

But there really wasn't anywhere else to go. All around me were armed guerrillas from the Kurdistan Workers party (PKK), the separatist group battling the Turkish army for control of the largely Kurdish southeast. Many of the guerrillas were no older than high school students—boys and girls toting AK-47s, knives, pistols, and those grenades. "Don't worry," said Beritan, who looked quite sweet in baggy green military wear. "We are very well trained. We haven't lost anyone yet from this camp."

Comforting words, except that the sounds of a Turkish bombing raid from somewhere in the distance were reverberating between the narrow walls of the valley. Guerrillas were running here and there, trying to find out what was being bombed and whether we were going to be the next target. The only way out of the camp—a three-hour hike over seemingly unmarked paths—was closed for now. Turkish soldiers were sweeping the area, looking for the guerrillas. And there I was, with them.

I was afraid. Trembling, in fact. It was my second day in the camp and I was eager to leave, but the bombing wouldn't stop. I kept scanning the area for places to hide. A cave on one side of the valley looked good, but a group of rocks was a lot closer. The guerrillas were amused by my fear. "I am not afraid to die," said twenty-one-year-old Ronahi, a former university student. "After all, we are fighting for our rights. Without the fight there is nothing. If we die, at least we die knowing that we have given our lives for the struggle for Kurdish freedom."

Welcome to the Marxist-Leninist PKK, a ten-thousand-strong guerrilla group waging a war for control of southeast Turkey, home to about half of the country's estimated twelve to fifteen million Kurds. By all accounts (except Ankara's), the PKK has emerged as the dominant fighting force of the Kurds, who have long chafed under Turkey's policy of forced assimilation. The PKK's battle is not the first Kurds have waged since the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923, but it is certainly the strongest. Since fighting broke out in 1984, more than 10,500 people have been killed, and the war has now spread beyond the confines of the southeast. This past year, the PKK lobbed bombs at tourist resorts on Turkey's western coast and attacked Turkish businesses and missions in Europe.

For many Kurds in the downtrodden southeast—where the economy is in tatters and social services are minimal—the PKK is seen as the only force standing up for the Kurds. "The PKK is the people and the people are the PKK," is a common refrain in the region. It's no surprise that many Kurds think this way. In the southeast, the state is the military, and the military wields its power harshly and indiscriminately. Since 1991, the army has forcibly evacuated over 730 villages in the region—usually by threatening to burn down houses if their inhabitants do not leave. In some cities,

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pockmarked buildings and shattered glass mark the soldiers' random shootings. Kurds who speak out against this turn up dead. Over five hundred Kurdish activists have been mysteriously murdered in the past two years. Human rights officials think the military is behind many of the killings.

Although restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language were eased in 1991, it remains essentially illegal to use Kurdish on television or radio, and in schools. Under the charge of "separatist propaganda," Turkey has prosecuted authors of books on Kurdish history, journalists who write about the Kurds, and almost anyone who dares speak up. Four of the seventeen activist Kurdish deputies in parliament may be charged with treason for statements they have made calling for greater Kurdish freedom.

But if the reasons why so many Kurds support the PKK are clear, what the PKK hopes to accomplish is somewhat more difficult to discern. When it first took up arms, it called for "socialist" revolution and a united Kurdistan spanning the Kurdish regions in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. As years passed, "socialism" was de-emphasized and the talk was of freedom for Kurds in Turkey. The PKK's approach to Islam also changed. Religion might be an opiate of the masses, but it could be a useful drug if its leaders promoted Kurdish nationalism. Lately, the PKK has been using the language of democracy. PKK statements from front organizations in Europe and the United States call for full democratic and human rights in Turkey. Abdullah Oclan, the Syrian-based leader of the PKK, has started referring to a federative solution—rather than outright independence—for the Kurds in Turkey. So what do the guerrillas really want? I was in the mountains of southeast Turkey to find out.

I arrived in the PKK camp following a long, bumpy trek on horseback, guided by two gum-chewing guerrillas who met me in a pro-PKK village. The commander was an imposing man with a droopy mustache, a fierce look, and a rather direct approach. "Much blood will have to flow before we get what we want," he told me. And that was before I got off the horse. "The Turkish republic refuses to accept Kurdish identity and nationalism. They leave us no choice but to fight. It isn't our pleasure to kill people, but it is because of their pressure. It is the will of our people that we fight. This is a people's war. Maybe if the big nations—your country, for example—realize we are serious, they will help us."

He wanted to know why the U.S. government did not support the PKK. Although I am not privy to Washington's internal decision-making processes, I knew enough to point out that the United States does not have a history of aiding Marxist-Leninist organizations. "Perhaps if you were to change your ideology, you know, give up the Leninism, you might get a better reception in the West," I suggested. He looked at me with very faint amusement. "Socialism is our target, we will never give it up. It is you who must change. The U.S. is an imperialist country which is trying to crush movements for freedom. Ask your leaders why they have killed our people. Only in socialism is there freedom."

I was soon turned over to Ronahi (the Kurdish word for intellectual), the university dropout who was to be my guide during my stay. She was plump, cheerful, and very patient. "Capitalism is bad," she explained, when I asked about the group's ideology. "It oppresses women, and keeps people poor. Socialism means everything for the people. We will all share and no one will be oppressed."

Ronahi came from an assimilated middle-class Kurdish family in Bursa, a pleasant city in western Turkey better known for being the first capital of the Ottoman Empire than for revolutionary fervor. She was studying philosophy in the university when she met the PKK. Soon, she learned exactly what Ankara had hoped assimilated Kurds would forever forget: "That I am a Kurd, that I have a language, and that Turkey is trying to wipe out my identity." In the process, she also learned that a Marxist-Leninist struggle was a necessary part of the nationalist fight. Her parents and friends disagreed, but she left nonetheless, trading in trendy clothes and a busy social life for fatigues and a gun.

She tried to explain the basics of the PKK's

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"revolution." First the Turkish army would be driven out of the region. Then, when the PKK had control, the guerrillas would set up a "Marxist-Leninist state." She was a little vague about the specifics. There would be "free elections," but of course everyone would vote for the PKK—"because we will free the people from capitalism, and they will want socialism."

It all seemed very clear-cut—to her, at least—and I asked how the guerrillas learned of these upcoming events. It was the daily political training, she explained, which was held between lessons on how to shoot a gun and attack the Turkish military. The camp was apparently well stocked with teaching materials: many guerrillas carried tracts written by the PKK's leader—dense paperbacks about the low position of women under capitalism, the inhumanity of capitalism, the poverty generated by capitalism, and the necessity of revolution. For light reading, they had books in Turkish by Russian writers, including Dostoyevski, Gorky, Tolstoy and Turgenev.

Ronahi and I wandered through the camp, a rocky valley half-hidden by shrubby trees and overhanging rocks. The men and woman were separated, and platoons of about six people each had their own spots of dirt for sleeping, eating, and the nightly self-criticism sessions. Ronahi's platoon was examining its faults, and we joined the other women around a fire. The women looked very serious and stared at the ground. One recounted her fears during an assault on a Turkish military post. Another briefly mentioned that she missed her family. Ronahi apparently had a perfect day, because she spent the whole time talking to me. Once a month, she said, the camp would gather for a group-wide confession. The statements were written up and sent to PKK leader Ocalan. "Can you imagine?" said Ronahi, "He reads everything. He takes such an interest in all of us."

Abdullah Ocalan—or "Apo," as he is called—was a favorite topic of conversation, especially among the female guerrillas. "Isn't he handsome?" asked a seventeen-year-old girl, pulling out a photo of the leader that she carried right next to a picture of her brother's wedding. I sighed appreciatively with the rest of the women, who began pulling out their own photos of Apo. Their only regret was that new recruits were no longer being trained at the camp near Ocalan's base. "All of us dream of meeting him," said Ronahi. "He is so brave."

Apo may be brave, but these girls were not so bad themselves. "Afraid, why should I be afraid?" scoffed Melsa, a fifteen-year-old whose name stood for the ideological saints of the PKK: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Apo. "There is only one thing, revolution. If I die, at least I die knowing I have fought for my people. All political paths are closed and we have no choice but to fight."

Melsa knew her history as well as she did her rhetoric, and she reeled off the dates of Kurdish rebellions—harshly put down—in the early years of the Turkish republic. "We were beaten then, but we will not be beaten now," she said. "The Kurds are tired of being killed and oppressed by Turkey. Even if they throw all of us out of the southeast, we will take up arms in the West."

But I wanted to talk about their lives. What did their families think? Were they ever afraid? "Our enemies have split us into four parts [Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria—EDS.], and the PKK brought us back together," said Ronahi. When I asked her whether she missed her family, she gave me what was becoming a regular history lesson—past and future. "First we will liberate this part of Kurdistan, then we will fight for the other parts. All other paths have been closed to us. There is only one thing, revolution against imperialism and for a socialist Kurdish state."

I tried again. Here they were, in this isolated camp. They could be fighting for years. Death lurks just over the mountains. Didn't they ever think of marriage, children, sex, their families? "No." In any case, sex was forbidden between guerrillas. So was marriage. Questions about children were superfluous.

"With our blood and souls, we are with you Apo," shouted the guerrillas. It was evening, and it was time for a swearing-allegiance-to-

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the-cause ceremony. I sat on a rock and watched some twenty-five men and women—the youngest was thirteen years old—march in place and swing their guns. The sun had set and the air was quiet.

The gathering depressed me. I knew that in a few months, many of these guerrillas would probably be dead, either from a poorly treated wound, the upcoming bitter cold, or a Turkish bullet. They were so young, and so sweet, really. The girls carried little pocket mirrors, and each morning they had urged me to comb my hair and wash my face, holding up the mirrors so I could see myself. They worried that I wasn't eating much, and gave up their blankets so I would be warm at night.

The commander was not so sweet. He and I had a long discussion about the PKK's ideological heroes. I was particularly interested in the role of Stalin. "Stalin fought against imperialism and supported national rights," the commander said. And what about all those people who died in the process? "You don't know the history, you only know the propaganda. Sure, he made some mistakes, but so have all political leaders." It didn't seem like a good time to ask him about PKK killings of "collaborators," a wide category that has included the wives and children of Kurds who are in the government-funded anti-PKK militia, schoolteachers, municipal workers, and outspoken dissenters.

What with the bombing and the grenades and the rhetoric, I was relieved finally to leave after three days. Stalinists with guns, I realized, make me nervous, no matter how cute some of them look. The Turkish government might do well to be a little nervous itself. Although the PKK's message of Marxist-Leninist revolution may not have spread much out of the mountains, its message of Kurdish freedom has. "Socialism? What does that mean?" a Kurdish villager miles away later asked me. "All I know is that the PKK is fighting for our rights." If Turkey does not put a stop to human rights abuses by the military against Kurdish civilians in southeast Turkey and lift restrictions on Kurdish political and cultural rights, guns are going to be grasped by a lot more Kurds. The PKK's Leninist rhetoric may be absurd, its methods often brutal, but its struggle has invigorated a long-oppressed Kurdish identity and made this a fight that Ankara will not win by force alone. □

Forrest D. Colburn

LETTER FROM MANAGUA

José Figueroa does not understand why the Plaza de España supermarket sells frozen Minute Maid orange juice imported from the United States when a dozen poor Nicaraguans hawk bags of sweet oranges in the supermarket's parking lot. He is bewildered that Nicaragua now has only eight movie theaters, when on the eve of the country's revolution in 1979 there were a hundred and thirty-six. And José is confused when leaders of his party, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN), say that the party "remains revolutionary, but in the modern sense of the word." He asks, "What does that mean?"

Like many talented young Nicaraguans of his generation, José entrusted twenty years of his life, his youth and more, to a politically charged set of ideals: revolution, equality, progress, and socialism. Now his memories are unsettling, disorienting, and bizarre. Aside

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from its abject poverty, Nicaragua shows next to no sign of its traumatic revolution. José's memento is a thick, heavy winter coat he used to wear when in the Soviet Union, completely useless in Nicaragua's tropical heat. José's past, and his present efforts to fit into the Nicaragua that has emerged out of what he helped create, are symptomatic for many in the country: the best decades of life are seen as having been spent futilely—even, sometimes, ridiculously—but nonetheless there are no regrets. Remorse is absent because the prevailing intellectual climate, so he believes, persuasively dictated the choices he made.

José grew up in the provincial capital of Chontales, a dry region in the center of Nicaragua, known for its cattle and cowboys. His mother taught elementary school and his father drove a tractor; together they raised nine children. Through his aptitude and sheer fortune, José won a scholarship to study in Chile during the turbulent years of Salvador Allende's effort to build socialism. Arriving in 1972, he participated along with every other university student in Chile's political struggles, intellectually and ideologically excited by the vogue for radical change. With the coup d'état he was arrested, jailed for four months, always fearful for his life.

Within a year of his return to Nicaragua, he entered the outlawed FSLN. From 1975 to 1977 he was publicly active, until his hidden Sandinista identity was "compromised." He went underground, spending most of the next two years smuggling arms from Panama to Nicaragua. In the final months of the insurrection, José fought in the north of Nicaragua, narrowly surviving a frightful ambush.

With the toppling of Anastasio Somoza in July of 1979, José entered the "police," the Ministry of the Interior, where he came to be third or fourth in rank, and one of the country's most powerful Sandinistas. For most of the years of the revolution, the entry to the headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) was adorned with a huge slogan, "The Center of Happiness in Nicaragua." But the Ministry was where coercion was dealt out to the perceived enemies of the revolution. And today José readily admits that it was not pleasant.

The Ministry of the Interior received guidance and technical assistance from the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union, and in the decade of Sandinista rule José made seven or eight trips to the Soviet Union, as well as trips to Cuba, East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria. In 1982, during his second or third trip to the Soviet Union (he does not remember which), José suffered a horrible accident. He was traveling in a military convoy in the Ukraine with Soviet army personnel and three other ranking Sandinistas, including *Comandante de la Revolución* Tomás Borge, minister of the interior. The vehicle José was traveling in fell behind, and was hit by a big truck hauling artillery. The other Nicaraguan (on his first trip outside of Nicaragua) in the vehicle was killed, as were three Soviet officers. Only the chaufeur and José survived. But José was left in a body cast from his toes to his armpits, with seventeen pins in his shattered bones.

For four months José lay in an isolated hospital, immobile, cold, in pain, and without a single soul with whom to converse. He spoke no Russian, and no one spoke Spanish. After a month he persuaded his nurse, through sign language, to find him something to read in Spanish: "a history of Soviet patriotic battles." He memorized the elephantine book.

After four months he persuaded another nurse, again through sign language, to wheel his hospital bed to a telephone, where he called the Nicaraguan ambassador in Moscow. After cursing the ambassador for never visiting or calling him, José demanded to be moved, saying that if the ambassador did not move him, he would, on his own, one way or another, leave the hospital and find his way home. The ambassador claimed that there was no hospital in Nicaragua that could attend José given the gravity of his injuries. José's retort was, "Send me somewhere Spanish is spoken."

Shortly thereafter, José—still in his body cast—was on a hellish flight to Cuba. After a miserable, but improved, month in Havana, José returned to Managua, where he spent the last three of his eight months in the same body

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cast. He returned to Havana to have the cast removed and to begin a rehabilitation program he describes as "pure torture."

After his fifteen months of incapacitation, José returned to the Ministry of Interior. There he worked with two of his brothers, who also held ranking positions. Their native province of Chontales experienced some of the worst, some say the worst, fighting between the Sandinistas and the counterrevolution, the *contra* as it was called then and the resistance as it is called now. José does not say much of what he did, either in Managua or in Chontales, other than to say it was difficult and that mistakes were made. Those with the *contra* say soberly that he was hard (*duro*). Whatever he did, it clearly weighs on him with an eerie solemnity. Yet there is no doubt that he earnestly believed that what he was doing was right. Indeed, given the logic of the paradigm dominant among young intellectuals of his generation in Latin America, what he did not only seemed right; it seemed historically inevitable.

José was in East Berlin a month before the Wall collapsed. He recalls no sign of what was to befall a perceived success, a model. The fall of the Wall, and all that came with it, was a surprise and profoundly disorienting. In Nicaragua itself, a decade of Sandinista rule had revealed problems, even "contradictions," but nothing—it was argued within the *Frente*—that an end to U.S. aggression and continued revolutionary enthusiasm and discipline could not solve. His party's loss in the February 1990 elections was devastating and, again, disorienting.

For two more years, José held on to his job as *comandante* at the Ministry of Interior, now called the Ministry of Governance. But work lost its glory and perceived importance. Worse, José was ostracized by the new government. An evening of excitement came in 1992 with the visit of a delegation of U.S. military personnel. At the conclusion of a long day of tense meetings, José suggested they, "break the ice and come over to his house for drinks." After a few shots of Nicaragua's Flor de Caña rum, each side told its secrets: what was the U.S. military's plan for invading Nicaragua and what was the Sandinistas' plan for defense from the invasion.

Shortly thereafter, José was ousted. The timing of his departure suggests to him that he was ousted because of pressure from the U.S. Department of State. At least he did negotiate a generous severance agreement. Still, after two decades of commitment to what he views as the most noble and unselfish ideals of his generation, José has a rickety body, a memory of a dreadful accident and a dreary recovery in the most foreign of environments for a Nicaraguan, the death in combat of many of his friends and comrades, a consciousness of having done things that hurt others, political confusion, an impoverished country—and a brand new Mitsubishi Montero (I never asked how he came about the latter).

Ironically, José and his brothers now are committed to the most typical of occupations for folk from Chontales—raising cattle, trying to build up a ranch and a small slaughterhouse. Grand meetings in Moscow have been replaced by harangues about the price of the odd steer. José is now doing just what he would have been doing if socialism, in the end a European political tradition, had never caught the political imagination of the most talented and socially responsible Nicaraguan youth. It is stunning how little remains materially from what was a passionate and all-consuming enterprise.

In Managua itself, the only visible sign of the revolution is an immense, ugly, metal sculpture of a man holding a pick in one arm and a Soviet AK-47 assault rifle in the other. The base of the sculpture proclaims, "Only the peasants and the workers will make it to the end." With Nicaragua now the poorest country in Latin America after Haiti, with unemployment at an estimated 60 percent, and with wages for the employed sorely depressed, the sculpture arouses only anger among those it pretends to inspire. But more than anything, it seems conspicuously out of place given the rapidity with which ideas about politics and economics have changed.

Aside from poverty, the legacy of the Sandinista Revolution is the political organiza-

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tion of every possible group with a shared interest. Even ex-members of the *contra* have organized themselves to get their entitlements from a fragile and bankrupt state. But if Nicaragua is replete with organizations, including the country's twenty-three political parties, it is not clear to thoughtful Nicaraguans what to believe in other than self-interest. José continues to be loyal to his party, still Nicaragua's strongest political party, but he is no longer sure what it means to be a Sandinista. So he keeps his boots clean and looks after his cattle.

Although José may rightfully feel a schism between himself and the "bourgeoisie," to the poor peasants who work for him and his brothers, there is no difference. Classes remain pronounced in Nicaragua and definable in the simplest of terms: those who worry about food and those who do not. To the poor majority of Nicaraguans, the Nicaraguan Revolution and its lingering tensions are often understandably interpreted as a feud among those families who own cars and rule Nicaragua. For the poor, ideological debates have left no imprint; their clamor is for "them" to reach an agreement. □

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Michael Walzer

MULTICULTURALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

Two powerful centrifugal forces are at work in the United States today. One breaks loose whole groups of people from a presumptively common center; the other sends individuals flying off. Both these decentering, separatist movements have their critics, who argue that the first is driven by a narrow-minded chauvinism and the second by mere selfishness. The separated groups appear to these critics as exclusive and intolerant tribes, the separated individuals as rootless and lonely egotists. Neither of these views is entirely wrong; neither is quite right. The two movements have to be considered together, set against the background of a democratic politics that opens a lot of room for centrifugal force. Understood in context, the two seem to me, despite the laws of physics, each one the other's remedy.

The first of these forces is an increasingly strong articulation of group difference. It's the articulation that is new, obviously, since difference itself—pluralism, even multiculturalism—has been a feature of American life from very early on. John Jay, in one of the *Federalist Papers*, describes the Americans as a people "descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in manners and customs."

These lines were already inaccurate when Jay wrote them in the 1780s; they were utterly falsified in the course of the nineteenth century. Mass immigration turned the United States into a land of many different ancestors, languages, religions, manners, and customs. Principles of government are our only stable and common commitment. Democracy fixes the limits and sets the ground rules for American pluralism.

Two contrasts can help us grasp the radical character of this pluralism. Consider, first, the (relative) homogeneity of countries like France, Holland, Norway, Germany, Japan, and China, where, whatever regional differences exist, the great majority of the citizens share a single ethnic identity and celebrate a common history. And consider, second, the territorially based heterogeneity of the old multinational empires (the Soviet Union was the last of these) and of states like the former Yugoslavia, the former Ethiopia, the new Russia, Nigeria, Iraq, India, and so on, where a number of ethnic and religious minorities claim ancient homelands (even if the boundaries are always in dispute). The United States differs from both these sets of countries: it isn't homogeneous nationally or locally; it's heterogeneous everywhere—a land of dispersed diversity, which is (except for the remaining Native Americans) no one's homeland. Of course, there are local patterns of segregation, voluntary and involuntary; there are ethnic neighborhoods and places inexactly but evocatively called "ghettoes." But none of our groups, with the partial and temporary exception of the Mormons in Utah, has ever achieved anything like stable geographical predominance. There is no American Slovenia or Quebec or Kurdistan. Even in the most protected American environments, we all experience difference every day.

And yet the full-scale and fervent articula-

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tion of difference is a fairly recent phenomenon. A long history of prejudice, subordination, and fear worked against any public affirmation of minority "manners and customs" and so served to conceal the radical character of American pluralism. I want to be very clear about this history. At its extremes it was brutal, as conquered Native Americans and transported black slaves can testify; at its center, with regard to religion and ethnicity rather than race, it was relatively benign. An immigrant society welcomed new immigrants or, at least, made room for them, with a degree of reluctance and resistance considerably below the standards set elsewhere. Nonetheless, all our minorities learned to be quiet: timidity has been the mark of minority politics until very recent times.

I remember, for example, how in the 1930s and 1940s any sign of Jewish assertiveness—even the appearance of "too many" Jewish names among New Deal Democrats or CIO organizers or socialist or communist intellectuals—was greeted among Jews with a collective shudder. The communal elders said, "Sha!" Don't make noise; don't attract attention; don't push yourself forward; don't say anything provocative. They thought of themselves as guests in this country long after they had become citizens.

Today all that is, as they say, history. The United States in the 1990s is socially, though not economically (and the contrast is especially striking after the Reagan years), a more egalitarian place than it was fifty or sixty years ago. No one is shushing us anymore; no one is intimidated or quiet. Old racial and religious identities have taken on greater prominence in our public life; gender and sexual preference have been added to the mix; and the current wave of immigration from Asia and Latin America makes for significant new differences among American citizens and potential citizens. And all this is expressed, so it seems, all the time. The voices are loud, the accents various, and the result is not harmony—as in the old image of pluralism as a symphony, each group playing its own instrument (but who wrote the music?)—but a jangling discord. It is very much like the dissidence of Protestant dissent in the early years of the Reformation: many sects, dividing and subdividing; many prophets and would-be prophets, all talking at once.

In response to this cacophony, another group of prophets, liberal and neoconservative intellectuals, academics, and journalists, wring their hands and assure us that the country is falling apart, that our fiercely articulated multiculturalism is dangerously divisive, and that we desperately need to reassert the hegemony of a single culture. Curiously, this supposedly necessary and necessarily singular culture is often described as a high culture, as if it is our shared commitment to Shakespeare, Dickens, and James Joyce that has been holding us together all these years. (But surely high culture divides us, as it always has—and probably always will in any country with a strong egalitarian and populist strain. Does anyone remember Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*?) Democratic politics seems to me a more likely resource than the literary or philosophical canon. We need to think about how this resource might usefully be deployed.

But isn't it already deployed—given that multicultural conflicts take place in the democratic arena and require of their protagonists a wide range of characteristically democratic skills and performances? If one studies the history of ethnic, racial, and religious associations in the United States, one sees, I think, that these have served again and again as vehicles of individual and group integration—despite (or, perhaps, because of) the political conflicts they generated. Even if the aim of associational life is to sustain difference, that aim has to be achieved *here*, under American conditions, and the result is commonly a new and unintended kind of differentiation—of American Catholics and Jews, say, not so much from one another or from the Protestant majority as from Catholics and Jews in other countries. Minority groups adapt themselves to the local political culture. And if their primary aim is self-defense, toleration, civil rights, a place in the sun, the result of success is more

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clearly still an Americanization of whatever differences are being defended. That doesn't mean that differences are defended quietly—quietness is not one of our political conventions. Becoming an American means learning not to be quiet. Nor is the success that is sought by one group always compatible with the success of all (or any of) the others. The conflicts are real, and even small-scale victories are often widely threatening.

The greater difficulties, however, come from failure, especially reiterated failure. It is associational weakness, and the anxieties and resentments it breeds, that pull people apart in dangerous ways. Leonard Jeffries's African-American Studies Department at the City College of New York is hardly an example of institutional strength. The noisiest groups in our contemporary cacophony and the groups that make the most extreme demands are also the weakest. In American cities today, poor people, mostly members of minority groups, find it difficult to work together in any coherent way. Mutual assistance, cultural preservation, and self-defense are loudly affirmed but ineffectively enacted. The contemporary poor have no strongly based or well-funded institutions to focus their energies or discipline wayward members. They are socially exposed and vulnerable. This is the most depressing feature of our current situation: the large number of disorganized, powerless, and demoralized men and women, who are spoken for, and also exploited by, a growing company of racial and religious demagogues and tinhorn charismatics.

But weakness is a general feature of associational life in America today. Unions, churches, interest groups, ethnic organizations, political parties and sects, societies for self-improvement and good works, local philanthropies, neighborhood clubs and cooperatives, religious sodalities, brotherhoods and sisterhoods: this American civil society is wonderfully multitudinous. Most of the associations, however, are precariously established, skimpily funded, and always at risk. They have less reach and holding power than they once did. I can't cite statistics; I'm not sure that anyone is collecting the right sorts of statistics; but I suspect that the number of Americans who are unorganized, inactive, and undefended is on the rise. Why is this so?

The answer has to do in part with the second of the centrifugal forces at work in contemporary American society. This country is not only a pluralism of groups but also a pluralism of individuals. It is perhaps the most individualist society in human history. Compared to the men and women of any earlier, old-world country, we are radically liberated, all of us. We are free to plot our own course, plan our own lives, choose a career, a partner (or a succession of partners), a religion (or no religion), a politics (or an antipolitics), a life-style (any style)—free to "do our own thing." Personal freedom is certainly one of the extraordinary achievements of the "new order of the ages" celebrated on the Great Seal of the United States. The defense of this freedom against puritans and bigots is one of the enduring themes of American politics, making for its most zestful moments; the celebration of this freedom, and of the individuality and creativity it makes possible, is one of the enduring themes of our literature.

Nonetheless, personal freedom is not an unalloyed delight. For many of us lack the means and the power to "do our own thing" or even to find our own things to do. Empowerment is, with rare exceptions, a familial, class, or communal, not an individual, achievement. Resources are accumulated over generations, cooperatively. And without resources, individual men and women find themselves hard-pressed by economic dislocations, natural disasters, governmental failures, and personal crises. They can't count on steady or significant communal support. Often they are on the run from family, class, and community, seeking a new life in this new world. If they make good their escape, they never look back; if they need to look back, they are likely to find the people they left behind barely able to support themselves.

Consider for a moment the cultural (ethnic, racial, and religious) groups that constitute our supposedly fierce and divisive multicultural-

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ism. All these are voluntary associations, with a core of militants, activists, and believers and a wide periphery of more passive men and women--who are, in effect, cultural free-riders, enjoying an identity that they don't pay for with money, time, or energy. When these people find themselves in trouble they look for help from similarly identified men and women. But the help is uncertain, for these identities are mostly unearned, without depth. Footloose individuals are not reliable members. There are no borders around our cultural groups and, of course, no border police. Men and women are free to participate or not as they please, to come and go, withdraw entirely, or simply fade away into the peripheral distances. This freedom, again, is one of the advantages of an individualist society; at the same time, however, it doesn't make for strong or cohesive associations. Ultimately, I'm not sure that it makes for strong or self-confident individuals.

Rates of disengagement from cultural association and identity for the sake of the private pursuit of happiness (or the desperate search for economic survival) are so high these days that all the groups worry all the time about how to hold the periphery and ensure their own future. They are constantly fund raising; recruiting; scrambling for workers, allies, and endorsements; preaching against the dangers of assimilation, intermarriage, passing, and passivity. Lacking any sort of coercive power and unsure of their own persuasiveness, they demand governmental programs (targeted entitlements, quota systems) that will help them press their own members into line. From their perspective, the real alternative to multiculturalism is not a strong and substantive Americanism, but an empty or randomly filled individualism, a great drift of human flotsam and jetsam away from every creative center.

This is, again, a one-sided perspective, but by no means entirely wrongheaded. The critical conflict in American life today is not between multiculturalism and some kind of cultural hegemony or singularity, not between pluralism and unity or the many and the one, but between the manyness of groups and of individuals, between communities and private men and women. And this is a conflict in which we have no choice except to affirm the value of both sides. The two pluralisms make America what it is or sometimes is and set the pattern for what it should be. Taken together, but only together, they are entirely consistent with a common democratic citizenship.

Consider now the increasingly dissociated individuals of contemporary American society. Surely we ought to worry about the processes, even though these are also, some of them, emancipatory processes, which produce dissociation and are its products:

- the rising divorce rate;
- the growing number of people living alone (in what the census calls "single person households");
- the decline in memberships (in unions and churches, for example);
- the long-term decline in voting rates and party loyalty (most dramatic in local elections);
- the high rates of geographic mobility (which continually undercut neighborhood cohesiveness);
- the sudden appearance of homeless men and women; and
- the rising tide of random violence.

Add to all this the apparent stabilization of high levels of unemployment and underemployment, especially among young people, which intensifies all these processes and aggravates their effects on already vulnerable minority groups. Unemployment makes family ties brittle, cuts people off from unions and interest groups, drains communal resources, leads to political alienation and withdrawal, increases the temptations of a criminal life. The old maxim about idle hands and the devil's work isn't necessarily true, but it comes true whenever idleness is a condition that no one would choose.

I am inclined to think that these processes, on balance, are more worrying than the multicultural cacophony—if only because, in a democratic society, action-in-common is better than withdrawal and solitude, tumult is better than passivity, shared purposes (even when we don't approve) are better than private listless-

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ness. It is probably true, moreover, that many of these dissociated individuals are available for political mobilizations of a sort that democracies ought to avoid. There are writers today, of course, who claim that multiculturalism is itself the product of such mobilizations: American society in their eyes stands at the brink not only of dissolution but of "Bosnian" civil war. In fact, we have had (so far) only intimations of an openly chauvinist and racist politics. We are at a point where we can still safely bring the pluralism of groups to the rescue of the pluralism of dissociated individuals.

Individuals are stronger, more confident, more savvy, when they are participants in a common life, responsible to and for other people. No doubt, this relation doesn't hold for every common life; I am not recommending religious cults or political sects—though men and women who manage to pass through groups of that sort are often strengthened by the experience, educated for a more modest commonality. It is only in the context of associational activity that individuals learn to deliberate, argue, make decisions, and take responsibility. This is an old argument, first made on behalf of Protestant congregations and conventicles, which served, so we are told, as schools of democracy in nineteenth-century Great Britain, despite the intense and exclusive bonds they created and their frequently expressed doubts about the salvation of nonbelievers. Individuals were indeed saved by congregational membership—saved from isolation, loneliness, feelings of inferiority, habitual inaction, incompetence, a kind of moral vacancy—and turned into useful citizens. But it is equally true that Britain was saved from Protestant repression by the strong individualism of these same useful citizens: that was a large part of their usefulness.

So, we need to strengthen associational ties, even if these ties connect some of us to some others and not everyone to everyone else. There are many ways of doing this. First and foremost among them, it seems to me, are government policies that create jobs and that sponsor and support unionization on the job. For unemployment is probably the most dangerous form of dissociation, and unions are not only training grounds for democratic politics but also instruments of economic democracy. Almost as important are programs that strengthen family life, not only in its conventional but also in its unconventional versions—in any version that produces stable relationships and networks of support.

But I want to focus again on cultural associations, since these are the ones thought to be so threatening today. We need more such associations, not fewer, and more powerful and cohesive ones, too, with a wider range of responsibilities. Consider, for example, the current set of federal programs—matching grants, subsidies, and entitlements—that enable religious communities to run their own hospitals, old-age homes, schools, day care centers, and family services. Here are welfare societies within a decentralized (and still unfinished) American welfare state. Tax money is used to second charitable contributions in ways that strengthen the patterns of mutual assistance that arise spontaneously within civil society. But these patterns need to be greatly extended—since coverage at present is radically unequal—and more groups brought into the business of welfare provision: racial and ethnic as well as religious groups (and why not unions, co-ops, and corporations too?).

We need to find other programs of this kind, through which the government acts indirectly to support citizens acting directly in local communities: "charter schools" designed and run by teachers and parents; tenant self-management and co-op buyouts of public housing; experiments in workers' ownership and control of factories and companies; locally initiated building, cleanup, and crime prevention projects; and so on. Programs like these will often create or reinforce parochial communities, and they will generate conflicts for control of political space and institutional functions. But they will also increase the available space and the number of functions and, therefore, the opportunities for individual participation. And participating individuals, with a growing sense of their own effective-

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ness, are our best protection against the parochialism of the groups in which they participate.

Engaged men and women tend to be widely engaged—active in many different associations both locally and nationally. This is one of the most common findings of political scientists and sociologists (and one of the most surprising: where do these people find the time?). It helps to explain why engagement works, in a pluralist society, to undercut racist or chauvinist political commitments and ideologies. The same people show up for union meetings, neighborhood projects, political canvassing, church committees, and—most reliably—in the voting booth on election day. They are, most of them, articulate, opinionated, skillful, sure of themselves, and fairly steady in their commitments. Some mysterious combination of responsibility, ambition, and meddlesomeness carries them from one meeting to another. Everyone complains (I mean that all of them complain) that there are so few of them. Is this an inevitability of social life, so that an increase in the number of associations would only stretch out the competent people, more and more thinly? I suspect that demand-side economists have a better story to tell about this "human capital." Multiply the calls for competent people, and the people will appear. Multiply the opportunities for action-in-common, and activists will emerge to seize the opportunities. Some of them, no doubt, will be narrow-minded and bigoted, but the greater their number and the more diverse their activities, the less likely it is that narrow-mindedness and bigotry will prevail.

A certain sort of stridency is a feature of what we may one day come to recognize as *early* multiculturalism; it is especially evident among the newest and weakest, the least organized, groups. It is the product of a historical period when social equality outdistances economic equality. Stronger organizations, capable of collecting resources and delivering real benefits to their members, will move these groups, gradually, toward a democratically inclusive politics. The driving force will be the more

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active members, socialized by their activity. Remember that this has happened before, in the course of ethnic and class conflict. When groups consolidate, the center holds the periphery and turns it into a political constituency. And so union militants, say, begin on the picket line and the strike committee and move on to the school board and the city council. Religious and ethnic activists begin by defending the interests of their own community and end up in political coalitions, fighting for a place on "balanced" tickets, and talking (at least) about the common good. The cohesiveness of the group invigorates its members; the ambition and mobility of the most vigorous members liberalizes the group.

I don't mean to sound like the famous Pollyanna. These outcomes won't come about by chance; perhaps they won't come about at all. Everything is harder now—family, class, and community are less cohesive than they once were; local governments and philanthropies command fewer resources; the street world of crime and drugs is more frightening; individual men and women seem more adrift. And there is one further difficulty that we ought to welcome. In the past, organized groups have succeeded in entering the American mainstream only by leaving other groups (and the weakest of their own members) behind. And the men and women left behind commonly accepted their fate or, at least, failed to make much noise about it. Today, as I have been arguing, the level of resignation is considerably lower, and if much of the subsequent noise is incoherent and futile, it serves nonetheless to remind the rest of us that there is a larger social agenda than our own success. Multiculturalism as an ideology is not only the product of, it is also a program for, greater social *and economic* equality.

If we want the mutual reinforcements of community and individuality to work effectively for everyone, we will have to act politically to make them effective. They require certain background or framing conditions that can only be provided by state action. Group life won't rescue individual men and women from dissociation and passivity unless there is a political strategy for mobilizing, organizing, and, if necessary, subsidizing the right sort of groups. And strong-minded individuals won't diversify their commitments and extend their ambitions unless there are opportunities open to them in the larger world: jobs, offices, and responsibilities. The centrifugal forces of culture and selfhood will correct one another only if the correction is planned. It is necessary to aim at a balance of the two—which means that we can never be consistent defenders of multiculturalism or individualism; we can never be communitarians or liberals simply, but now one, now the other, as the balance requires. It seems to me that the best name for the balance itself, the political creed that defends the framework and supports the necessary forms of state action for both groups and individuals, is social democracy. If multiculturalism today brings more trouble than hope, one reason is the weakness of social democracy (in this country: left liberalism). But that is another and a longer story. □

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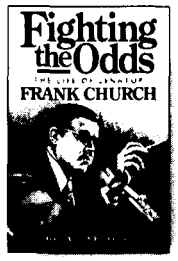

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Katha Pollitt

FEMINISM AT THE CROSSROADS

Feminism, like Broadway, the novel, and God, has been declared dead many times. Indeed, unlike those other items, it has been declared dead almost since its birth—by which I mean its modern rebirth in the 1960s. Feminism has also, as Susan Faludi demonstrated so cleverly in *Backlash*, been blamed for making women miserable, for causing everything from infertility—see? you waited too long to get pregnant because you were hell-bent on a fancy career and didn't settle for that nice boy next door twenty years ago, and now look—to poverty and divorce, which in this version of life is always initiated by men. And if that line doesn't work, there are always children, as in: feminism is all right for *women*, but what about the kids, foisted off on day-care centers run by child molesters and deprived of paternal authority by divorce, which in this version of life is always initiated by women.

So it's with great pleasure and some relief that I observe that we are not gathered here tonight to debate whether feminism is actively bad or just irrelevant, but to discuss its future direction. "Feminism at the Crossroads"—that sounds dramatic, doesn't it, full of promise, or is it threat?—of challenge at any rate, opportunities to be seized or missed, of signposts that if rightly read will send women onto the broad main highway of civic life and personal happiness but if misread or wrongly chosen will send them down some ill-lit alley, or even up the proverbial garden path. I will quarrel a bit with that metaphor later, but first I'd like to observe that a crossroads is a much more exciting place to be than a graveyard, so clearly we are making progress!

This article is taken from a talk given at the New School for Social Research in New York City in the fall of 1993.

What are the street signs on the feminist crossroads? Women today are enjoying a lively debate on a number of issues, although perhaps "enjoying" is not the *mot juste* here, given how acrimonious these debates can become. There's a debate around sexuality issues, which tends to be played out over pornography. And there's a debate about gender roles in marriage, which is expressed around issues of, say, the "mommy track" at work, whereby women would trade professional advancement for a schedule that would make it easier for them to fulfill a modified version of traditional domestic roles at home: you'll notice that nobody calls it the "parent track." There's a debate about work itself: should women enter the male-dominated professions on terms already laid down, or change them? Or fight for the upward valuation of the traditional female jobs? Grade-school teacher or college professor? Nurse or doctor? Fight for the right of women soldiers to enter combat, or fight the military itself?

What all these debates have in common is that they tend to divide into two broad camps: In one fall those who would shore up and protect some notion of women as different than men—whether by nature, nurture, or more or less immutable social function—who, because of that difference, need special protections in order not to be disadvantaged by a male-dominant social order. And in the other, we find those who see gender as a more fluid social construction, with the sexes sharing a broad range of traits and ways of life, and who see their feminist task as opening every social possibility/opportunity to women. To oversimplify greatly, one can pose the question as, which do women need, more freedom or more

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protection? More respect for individual variations among women or more respect for traditional feminine traits and roles?

But if one street sign reads freedom and another protection, we can see that there are problems with our crossroads metaphor. In the first place, if standing at the crossroads means having to choose a direction, it will immediately become apparent that American feminism has been divided over which path to take for over a century. Although I'm sure Andrea Dworkin would take issue with me here, I see important continuities between the antipornography movement and, say, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU): both use powerful Puritan energies already present in American society in order to mount a challenge to male domestic irresponsibility and violence: men will be tamed by being deprived of their evil pleasures (rather than: women will be empowered by confronting inequality head-on); both mistake a symbol for a cause; both share a certain sense of women as pure and nonsexual and better than men: Frances Willard, the head of the WCTU, even espoused the ideal of marriage without sex entirely. And today's pro-sex feminists can trace their lineage back to Frances Wright, Victoria Woodhull, the Utopian feminists of the Oneida community, and other early nineteenth-century social experiments. Similarly, the debate over whether women need more protection or more equality at work has a long history, with surprising people lining up on both sides of the issue: Eleanor Roosevelt, for example, opposed the Equal Rights Amendment because she believed it would expose women to increased exploitation in the workplace, and supported so-called protective legislation that limited the hours of working women.

A second problem with our crossroads metaphor is that it assumes that, along the special/equal or protection/freedom divide women will line up on one side or the other. As Ann Snitow suggested in "Pages from a Gender Diary" (*Dissent*, Spring 1989) this is a misleading picture, which better fits hardened crusaders of the movement than it does most women. It may be true that at some deep philosophical level there is a contradiction between wanting more sexual freedom and wanting less pornography, or wanting to see women's experience reflected across the academic board and wanting independent women's studies departments, or wanting to break down the gender-segregated workforce and wanting comparable worth for the historically underpaid jobs in which women predominate. But at the practical level of lived daily life, one finds surprisingly few women who feel compelled to take a hard and consistent line. In her interesting book, *Feminism Without Illusions*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues that there is a contradiction between the individualism at the heart of the modern American women's movement and the demands it also makes, or ought to make, for more collective responsibility for the disadvantaged. But many women, including myself, don't see it as an either/or situation. Last year, to give an example from my own work, I wrote an article attacking the wing of feminism I called "difference feminism," that is, the notion that women are more or less immutably different than men in ways that have important moral consequences. For example, that women are kinder, gentler, more harmonious, and less competitive than men. I argued that the different social styles of the two sexes are more apparent than real and do not, in any case, translate into moral and political differences in the public realm, and that it was a great mistake to base claims to political power on, for example, the supposed superior altruism and honesty of female politicians. I still think I was right, despite the suspicious fact that of all the essays I've written for the *Nation*, this was the one that got the most favorable comment from men. But the fact is, many women have no trouble at all believing simultaneously that women are morally superior to men and that they are also equal to men. In the same way, women can both admire Hillary Rodham Clinton because she is a smart, powerful working mother, and live with the unfortunate fact that her current political position was achieved through marriage.

A very good example of how close the two different strains of feminism can be is the response to Anita Hill. Now there's certainly a way to read Hill's charges that fits in with

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protectionist, women-are-better feminism: as many pointed out at the time of the Thomas hearings, not every woman would be disgusted, bowled over and physically upset by off-color remarks of the sort she claimed Thomas made to her—plenty of women, indeed, have been known to make such remarks themselves. Her ten-year silence also fits a certain vision of women as unable to defend themselves, thus needing lots of extra help from the law and the state. But the political effect of Hill's testimony could not have been more activist: women, the lesson was, must win political power in order for their concerns to be addressed.

It should not, perhaps, surprise us that in daily life, and in the political realm as well, feminists, and many women who resist the label too, should find themselves traveling all roads at once rather than marching firmly down one path or the other. This reflects women's real condition: most women work *and* have children; are married *and* know that marriage these days may well not be for life. Women who have abortions also have babies; women who resent men's interest in pornography *also* have forced Harlequin romances to include semi-explicit sex scenes. They want to have sexual adventures *and* not to be raped or abused. To be both women *and* human beings. It's not so surprising, then, that we find women who consider themselves to be feminists shifting back and forth between these two camps. And historically, indeed, both have achieved some success.

On the whole, however, I would say that feminism's best hope lies with equality, because although equality has the defect of sometimes seeming rather counter-intuitive—why legally treat pregnancy like an illness when we all know very well it *isn't* an illness—it has the great advantage of being open-ended. Protectionist or difference feminism says, in effect: this is what women are like, this is the kind of life they lead, so let's shape social policy and the law to acknowledge and reflect it. For example, the "mommy track" says, look, we all know women do most of the child care and most of the housework, so let's make it easier for them to get through the double day of paid employment and domestic responsibilities. In

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the short run, this might even genuinely help women—but it also assumes that gender roles in the family aren't going to change, even though they are rapidly doing so, even as we speak, and throws its weight behind keeping those roles the same. Protectionist policies of the past have a way of outdating themselves. When the Soviet Union, in its early days, instituted a policy whereby women could take off from work while they had their menstrual periods, that probably seemed the height of compassion, common sense, and enlightened social policy. But what it really did was ensure that women would do all the domestic labor—after all, they had those days off, free for the asking—and enshrine in law ideas about menstruation that seem fairly fantastic today.

If I had to predict which road feminism will take, I would have to say that the material conditions for protectionist or "difference" feminism seem to be steadily eroding. Fewer and fewer women can afford to make stay-at-home motherhood the basis for a full identity; you will notice that stay-at-home childless wifehood, once also a common lifestyle, is no longer even discussed as a rational choice. Families are small and not very stable; that seems likely to remain the case, even if the family-values crowd succeeds in making abortion harder to achieve or divorce more difficult to obtain. In the workplace, gender barriers are slowly breaking down: that women are naturally more caring than men may suit the self-image of nurses and social workers, but doesn't really do much for, say, bartenders and marines. Little by little, the genders are converging: they are educated more alike and raised more alike than ever before, and out of economic necessity as much as anything else, their roles within marriage are converging too. Consider the recent census report that 20 percent of fathers care for children while their wives are working.

The idea that men and women are radically different species of being, which not so long ago struck so many as an indisputable fact of nature, is more and more coming to be revealed as a historical construct, connected to the rise of the bourgeois industrial household, a social form whose end we are living through. In that sense, then, protectionist or difference feminism is at bottom a nostalgic project, which I think today appeals to women at least partly because it seems to protect them against new and uncertain social forms and understandings—the sexually predatory behavior, for example, of many male college students, which in previous situations was directed toward women of inferior social class rather than those of their own. The truth is, though, that it can't protect them, it can only make them feel better for a little while, like praying in a foxhole.

So perhaps the real way feminism will resolve its indecisiveness at the crossroads is that it will continue to debate and hesitate and try both roads at once until one day it sees that in fact the crossroads has disappeared. And then, of course, being feminists, we'll all congratulate ourselves over how right we were to choose what was, in fact, the only possible path—equality, which will at that point be understood to mean not women being the same as men, but both sexes sharing a more or less common life. □

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Health Care Reform

Robert J. Brand

SHOULD WE SUPPORT CLINTON'S PLAN?

Health care reform is the critical political issue confronting the American left in 1994. How should we relate to the Clinton plan? Congress is not going to vote on *our* plan: a single-payer system that would guarantee every American all necessary health services with no out-of-pocket costs. Instead, we face a vote where the best we can get is a patchwork, uniquely American plan that recognizes the accelerating corporatization of American health care and tries to build universal access around the untested theories of managed competition. Competing health care corporations will ration care to all those who cannot afford to buy their way up the hierarchy of plans. Yet even this hodgepodge will not pass without a significant left mobilization. So what are we to do?

First, let's recognize how improved our position is. The president of the United States supports a national health care system that provides universal access to comprehensive benefits at an affordable cost. He reaffirms his support at every opportunity—his desire to provide the American people with a universal package of health care benefits that "can never be taken away."

Second, this president has shown an extraordinary ability to organize a majority in the Congress. On some occasions we have not been happy with the results (NAFTA). On some occasions he gives up too much (the economic incentive program). But he is a skilled politician capable of assembling a majority for health care reform and he calls health care reform his highest priority for 1994. The pro-Clinton forces do not yet have the votes to pass their reform plan. But they seem to be preparing for a major fight.

Third, the president has popularized a list of six principles of health care reform, a list largely taken from advocates of a single-payer system.

- "Security" recognizes the importance of universal entitlement to lifelong, comprehensive benefits.
- "Simplicity" recognizes that the United States spends more than 24 percent of every health care dollar on administrative costs compared to a maximum of 10 percent to 11 percent for other industrialized countries.
- "Savings" recognizes that our health care system costs a minimum of 25 percent more than those of our trading partners.
- "Quality" recognizes that the United States does poorly in longevity and infant mortality and that we distribute mortality and morbidity by race, class, ethnicity, sex and geography.
- "Choice" recognizes that people want the freedom to choose their own physicians.
- "Responsibility" recognizes that the right wing still mistakenly believes that individuals paying for health care somehow makes for a rational, high quality, low cost health care system.

Five out of six ain't bad.

Fourth, the president's plan offers an opportunity to significantly benefit the poor. The abolition of Medicaid, which has evolved into an underfunded, discriminatory segregation of poor people into substandard health services, is a strong component of his program. Combining poor people and working people into a single group of health care consumers may advance

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equality and lessen racial isolation in our urban areas. While the devil is in the details, the general direction of reform advocated by the president is positive and would offer substantial improvement for poor people and minorities.

Fifth, the administration's plan has a fair chance of actually benefiting most Americans in the short run, even though it still leaves a significant left agenda. Let us be clear on what it will achieve:

- Nearly everyone is covered, except undocumented workers, who are also excluded in single-payer reform proposals. For virtually everyone else, there is some access to health care.
- The benefits package is broad. There are some problems in the exclusion of long-term care, mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, and there are unrealistic assumptions about treatment for people with serious and chronic problems. But for most people, these benefits are better than what they have now.
- The cost-sharing provisions are no worse for most Americans than the cost sharing we bear now, and the payment system moves us slightly in the direction of distributing costs by income (there is a cap on out-of-pocket expenses, there is a lower rate of co-insurance). The plan still holds that people have to pay out-of-pocket for health services so as not to "over-consume," but correcting this is a long, continuing fight.
- The plan recognizes that although freedom of choice is a goal, it is not, now, a practical reality for most Americans. Poor people, people on Medicare, nonunion workers whose bosses choose their health plans, people who cannot afford to pay for specialists, people who are not experts in medical practice and have to trust their physicians' choice of specialist—all these already have lost their freedom of choice. The Clinton plan simply recognizes this and gives people an expanded choice of primary care physicians and then the luck of the draw for specialists.
- The plan creates a nationwide network of health care alliances, which, beyond the rhetoric, can evolve into a monitoring structure for the American people, preventing the worst profiteering of HMOs, insurance companies, and providers, defending equal access for the poor, and assuring real choice and services for those whom the gatekeepers exclude.
- The plan includes a mechanism to control health care costs by capping health insurance premiums. While not elegant, this is a workable interim step, especially given the consumer advocacy and regulatory roles of the alliances.

Clinton's reform plan is a major change in the political landscape. It is important to remember that the Reagan-Bush years were filled with denials of the health care crisis. We must also remember that this health care reform package has evolved without the leadership of any mobilized popular movement for change. The labor movement, which has played the largest role in demanding health care reform, is struggling to survive, to develop an effective method of organizing in a global economy, to achieve labor law reform, and to battle the runaway power of capital and the ethic of privatization. The civil rights and antipoverty movements are small and overwhelmed by the growing polarization of American society. The women's health movement continues to confront restrictive antichoice measures, the exclusion of poor women from access to abortion, and a host of other issues.

Given its top-down history and its internal limitations, the Clinton health care package represents a substantial reform that offers improved care to a majority of Americans and establishes firmly the obligation of government to provide access to comprehensive care for all Americans. This, in itself, is a victory.

What Happened to Single-Payer Reform?

Now we must confront the issue of *how* we support this plan. The Clinton plan is not the best health care reform proposal. It continues to spend too much money on not enough health care. It does nothing to correct the basic problem of market-based health care: profiteering by market segmentation.

Permit me to tell the secret that everyone who has ever worked in health care knows: making a profit is very easy. All you have to do is serve healthy, that is, affluent, young patients. They cost less to care for. Since all health care reimbursement is based on some form of averaging, if you receive an average payment for a patient

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whose costs are below average, you make money. The more and better you skim, the more you make. In the United States, it is easy to pick the market niche that maximizes profits. Then more draconian rationers will come forward to provide care for the un-preferred consumers and will be seen as socially responsible for doing what no one else will.

Single-payer health care challenges this pattern of entrepreneurial behavior. Managed competition lets it continue to dominate the health sector. Under managed competition HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations) will make profits by choosing some patients and excluding others. This is the Achilles heel of managed competition and why we really need single-payer health care. Single-payer institutes negotiated, global budgets and a universal right to health care in a single system and draws its substantial savings from administrative simplification.

What happened to single-payer health care reform anyway? Every single-payer advocate who has met with Hillary Rodham Clinton or other leaders of the Health Care Reform Task Force reports their clear sympathy. In the world of Washington gossip, it is hard to find a key player who won't privately admit that "single payer is the best."

A single-payer system covers more benefits. It redistributes income in a progressive fashion. It controls health care costs to benefit the entire society. It allows freedom of choice for consumers. It creates a single health system for all Americans. All citizens, regardless of income, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, have the same power to get the health services they need. This is the health system we really want.

So what happened? Single-payer health care ran into four problems.

First, the president made a simple, tactical decision that he was unwilling to risk Democratic control of the Congress and the White House in 1996 by proposing a health care reform system that would require hundreds of billions of dollars in new taxes. Even though these tax payments would be cheaper to employers than the continuation of an insurance premium system, and even though they would replace the substantial burden of out-of-pocket costs, the president clearly felt that proposing a massive tax-financed system would risk sinking the Democratic administration.

Second, the administration decided that it could not fight the insurance industry. It believes that the industry is popular and strong, while single-payer advocates argue that it is despised by most Americans, who associate it with exclusion or claims denial. The administration saw a different industry—a power within the investment markets and, therefore, the Beltway.

We should remember that the power of the insurance companies lies in the capital they invest. In health care they handle hundreds of billions of dollars of premium income each year, which they invest in the short-term capital markets during the period after premiums are collected and before providers are paid. And health care is a small part of the industry's portfolio. Therefore, the administration simply decided to split the insurance companies, assigning the large companies the task of organizing the American health system under some degree of competition and regulation and cutting out the small ones.

Third, the administration was unable to reach a decision on a fundamental issue of public policy and health economics. If the health care sector is simply another sector of the economy, then, in a capitalist society, regulation will be minimal, and growth will be encouraged. That is why health care costs are now nearly 15 percent of our gross domestic product. But if the health care sector is a social necessity and crucial part of our infrastructure, then it should be regulated.

Because this dilemma was not resolved by the Clinton administration, it opted for some recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities (managed competition) and some recognition of health as infrastructure (global budgets, premium caps, and health alliances as regulators). Single-payer health care would have firmly resolved the dilemma by saying that the health sector is a necessary social service and not an entrepreneurial haven. But this was unacceptable to the administration.

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Finally, we have to remember that although Clinton is committed to providing some relief to the poor, he is not as committed to increased power or even equity for workers. If national health care reform requires that workers pay more out-of-pocket or do not get relief from staggering out-of-pocket costs, this is an acceptable price to be paid. Without a concern for balancing social and economic policies in favor of the working class, Clinton health care reform is able to use an employment base, a competitive market of corporatized providers, and a potential shift to workers' out-of-pocket costs as the basis of his reform package.

Given these political priorities, Clinton has put together a fairly decent, workable (at least in the short run) program.

An Organizing Response

The Clinton proposal, if it is to remain universal, comprehensive, and economically viable, leaves little room for negotiation. The great deal maker will destroy what is worthwhile in his proposal if he tries to make deals and move further to the center. Forces to the right of Clinton want to deregulate, do away with the alliances and the budgetary caps, and weaken the employer-based mandate. If any of these things happen, the plan has no chance of success. Leftist support of the Clinton plan should be conditioned on the presence of the following features. Without the inclusion of all these, we should be prepared to say "Not This Health Care Reform."

Feature 1: Universal access, a primary goal in health care reform, requires cost controls. A health care system that consumes 15 percent of gross domestic product, while leaving thirty-seven million people uninsured and fifty million people with inadequate insurance, is simply not a practical base upon which to create universal insurance. Clinton plans to control costs through the use of health alliances and budgetary caps. Although the caps are described as "fallbacks," there is no question that they will be necessary. While not elegant, they can be effective. But they cannot be negotiated away.

Therefore, changes in the Clinton plan to weaken cost controls are simply unacceptable: they will create a health system that won't work. Our job is to make sure that the plan is not weakened; we must insist on universal access to comprehensive benefits for the least cost possible.

Similar attempts will be made to weaken the employer mandate or increase individual costs. They are similarly unacceptable.

Feature 2: Clinton remains committed to offering each state the option of adopting a single-payer system. This will be a focus of right-wing opposition to the Clinton bill. The implementation of health care reform will take years; until 1998 or 1999, legislative battles, the development of health alliances, and the continuing cost crisis will keep the health care issue in front of us. Therefore, we have five years for states to implement the single-payer system.

This is a tremendous opportunity for organizing coalitions to go beyond the Clinton proposal. Trade unionists, consumers, seniors, working people who melt at the touch of presidential authority are really quite good at confronting and pushing state legislators. If we want to build a democratic left, then working for health care reform at the state level is a good place to start. These state systems can then become the model for the next stage of health care reform.

Feature 3: The right claims that the alliances will be huge government bureaucracies. I don't want to suggest that the alliance arrangement is the best way to organize oversight in the health system, but I believe that the alliances will play a crucial role in assuring greater equity in the health system. They will be the first line of defense in preventing providers from discriminatory marketing practices. They must have regulatory authority.

Feature 4: The reality of inequality in our health system poses many concerns for poor people and especially for people of color. There is little history of HMOs effectively delivering health services to the poor. In fact, poor people with existing health problems are at considerable medical risk in HMOs. We must assure that poor people can get good, nondiscriminatory health care. This means that provider organizations will not have the freedom to market only where they choose and to avoid certain populations and their physicians. The barriers imposed by gatekeepers

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cannot be burdensome: health care reform must benefit not only young, educated people, but also overburdened, less articulate people with complex medical and social needs.

Feature 5: We also have to insist that abortion be assured as a woman's right and as a covered health benefit in this plan. A plan that arbitrarily takes a health service and makes it unavailable except to women who can pay for it privately is simply unacceptable. Here again we have the agreement of the administration. But we will need to mobilize to keep that agreement strong.

Feature 6: The health sector is going through a wholesale reorganization as providers prepare for reform. The corporatization, consolidation, merger mania, and resultant shrinking of the health care work force will accelerate over the next few years. The more than nine million health care workers in the United States will need protection. The AFL-CIO has prepared a set of proposals that offer some protection and a range of retraining options for health care workers during the reform process. We need to make this an issue of justice for all health care workers.

If we take the position that justice on these issues is our bottom line, if we lobby and push the ninety-two sponsors of single-payer reform to help the president make these bottom-line issues, we can win on them. Managed competition that addresses these issues is an actual victory. We will have to track them through the legislative process, the regulation writing process, the formation of the alliances, and the process of state legislative action to build toward single-payer reform. This is our health care agenda for the next five years. □

Vanessa Gamble

THE POLITICS OF HEALTH: RACE BLINDNESS IN D.C.?

Recently, I attended a conference on race and medicine. As part of his presentation, one of the participants showed a slide of an invitation for a social event that had been sent out by an Indiana medical society. The theme of the event was "Jungle Fever." The announcement showed a white couple, dressed in safari garb, in a boiling cauldron of water. They were surrounded by a monkey eating bananas and a black man with a bone in his nose. The black man was looking at the couple with glee, obviously in anticipation of his supper.

The dance was to be held on January 12, 1994.

This episode graphically illustrates why it is crucial that the debate over health care reform confront issues of race and racism. Thus far, public discussion has focused on the elimination of financial barriers. Important, certainly, but if we ignore racial issues, we risk further entrenchment of the already appalling disparities in health that exist between black and white Americans.

A few dismal statistics will show the inadequacies of a health reform program that limits itself to questions of reimbursement and avoids tackling American racism.

- The infant mortality rate for African-American babies is twice that of white babies and three times as high in some urban areas.
- Black men younger than forty-five have a 45 percent higher rate of lung cancer and are ten times more likely to die of hypertension than their white peers.
- African-American women aged forty-five to sixty-four are twice as likely to die of diabetes as white women of the same age group.
- Of the estimated 52,000 new cases of cervical cancer diagnosed in 1988, over half of the cases were among African-American

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women. These women were three times as likely to die as white women.

• The life expectancy of black women is six years shorter than that of white women. That of black men is seven years shorter than white men. After narrowing during the 1960s and 1970s, the gap in life expectancy between black and white men widened during the 1980s.

A much-publicized article in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (January 1990) further underscores the appalling health status of African Americans. The authors, two physicians from Harlem Hospital, found that black men in Harlem had shorter life expectancies than men living in Bangladesh. The men from Bangladesh had a 55 percent chance of reaching the age of 65, while the men from Harlem had a 40 percent chance. In other words, men living in one of the world's wealthiest countries had a lower survival rate than those living in one of the poorest. If the physicians conducted their research today, there is a strong possibility that the figures would present an even grimmer picture. They based their conclusions on data that had been compiled before the epidemics of crack and AIDS had begun to wreak havoc on the lives of Harlem residents.

Several factors have contributed to the poor health of African Americans. Of course, financial barriers to health care have been significant. An estimated thirty-seven million Americans of all races do not have health insurance. Of all those under sixty-five, 15 percent are white, 25 percent are African American, and 35 percent are Latino. Insurance alone, however, won't end the disparities I have described.

In 1985, Margaret Heckler, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, released a report of a task force on black and minority health. One of its conclusions was that unhealthy life-styles greatly contributed to the health status of African Americans. "Progress," Heckler stated, "depends more on education and a change in personal behavior than it does on more doctors, more hospitals, or more technology." The implication here is clear: if only black folks would learn to take better care of themselves their health would significantly improve.

Health education and health promotion are certainly important—and can and should play a role in efforts to improve health and decrease medical costs. Their inclusion in the Clinton program should be applauded. But the solution to the health care problems of African Americans is more complex than a "Say no to drugs, say yes to skim milk" approach suggests. An incident described by Laurie Kaye Abraham in her new book, *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America*, highlights this complexity. Abraham recounts the story of a young black mother with severe asthma that was exacerbated by the presence of a cat in the home. The women's physician repeatedly urged her to get rid of the animal. She refused. She finally told the physician that if she got rid of the cat there would be nothing to protect her children from rats.

Calls for responsible behavior should not be allowed to deflect consideration of broader factors. People are not always in control of every aspect of their so-called life-style. Discussions of health promotion must also mention racial targeting by cigarette and alcohol companies, the paucity of supermarkets with fresh produce in poor neighborhoods, and, as the above example makes clear, the importance of decent housing.

The health status of African Americans and the services that they receive are inextricably linked to social, political, and economic factors. Racism has resulted in disproportionate poverty, segregated housing, inferior schools, and unemployment. Efforts to improve the health care of African Americans cannot be blind to these realities.

Racial disparities in health status and access to care persist even for those African Americans who have financial resources. Preterm delivery (delivery at less than thirty-seven weeks gestation) is a major factor in infant mortality. The racial disparities in infant mortality are, in part, the result of a higher occurrence of preterm deliveries in African-American than in white women. High infant mortality rates are not restricted to poor black mothers. Middle class women are also affected. Genetic factors linked

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to race do not fully explain the rates. Social factors must be taken into account. Researchers associated with the Centers for Disease Control have recently argued that racism *and* sexism adversely affect the lives of all African-American women, no matter what their social class. The everyday stresses of racism and sexism, the argument goes, negatively affect the pregnancies of black women.

There is a growing body of medical literature suggesting that even when African Americans have health insurance, racial disparities persist. African Americans are less likely to have access to particular technologies. Medical decisions are even now being made based on skin color, and white lives appear to have higher value. In 1989 *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) published a report that demonstrated racial inequities in the treatment of heart disease. In this study, white and black patients had similar rates of hospitalization for chest pain, but the white patients were one-third more likely to undergo coronary angiography and more than twice as likely to be treated with bypass surgery or angioplasty. The racial disparities persisted even after adjustments were made for differences in income.

Three years later another study in *JAMA* reinforced these findings. It found that older black patients on Medicare got heart bypass operations only about one-fourth as often as comparable white patients. Disparities were greatest in the rural South—white patients had the surgery seven times as often as black patients. Medical factors did not fully explain the differences. This study suggests that the national health insurance program that already exists does not solve the access problems of the African Americans it covers.

Researchers in a study that *The New England Journal of Medicine* published last year also found race related differences in access to cardiac technologies. They found that white patients hospitalized at a Veterans Administration hospital were more than twice as likely to have angioplasty and three times more likely to undergo bypass surgery. Questions about the appropriateness of high tech medicine aside, these procedures are the treatment of choice at the present time. African Americans are being denied therapies that can often relieve symptoms and perhaps prolong life.

Why the racial disparities? There are several possible explanations including health problems that precluded the use of the procedures, differences in the willingness to accept medical advice or undergo surgery, and differences in the severity of illness. However, the role of race cannot be discounted. A few years ago, National Public Radio did a report on racial inequities in health care. The program included an interview with Dr. Reginald Peniston, who was then a cardio-thoracic surgeon at Howard University Hospital, a black hospital located in Washington, D.C. Peniston recalled an appalling incident. An elderly African-American woman came to him after another surgeon had declined to operate on her. The physician's reason? She had outlived the normal life expectancy of a black woman. Dr. Peniston performed the surgery and the woman did fine.

African Americans themselves correctly recognize that they are treated differently in the health care system. As part of the research for her book on urban health care, Laurie Abraham, a white woman, followed a poor black family for three years. Often she accompanied them to the hospital. She found that hospital personnel dealt with her differently because she was white. For example, when they entered a room together, they addressed her first rather than a family member.

Such stories are not isolated. A national telephone survey conducted in 1986 found that African Americans were more likely than whites to report that their physicians did not inquire sufficiently about their pain, did not tell them how long it would take for prescribed medicine to work, did not explain the seriousness of their illness or injury, and did not discuss test and examination findings. A report issued in February 1994 found that physicians were less likely to give pregnant black women information about the hazards of smoking and drinking during pregnancy.

The anger and frustration that many African Americans feel when they encounter the health care system can be heard in the words of Alicia Georges, a professor of nursing at Lehman College. In a 1991 *Time* magazine article, she

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recalled an experience that she had had in an emergency room. "Back a few years ago, I was having excruciating abdominal pain, and I wound up at a hospital in my area," she recalled. "The first thing that they began to ask me was how many sexual partners I'd had. I was married and owned my own house. But immediately, in looking at me, they said. 'Oh, she just has pelvic inflammatory disease.' "

Perhaps because of her nursing background, Georges recognized the implications of the questioning. She had come face-to-face with the stereotype of black women as sexually promiscuous. Pelvic inflammatory disease is usually a consequence of sexually transmitted diseases, including gonorrhea and chlamydia. It does result in abdominal pain, but so do many other conditions, some of which can be fatal. In Georges's case, the physicians saw her skin color and immediately assumed that she had pelvic inflammatory disease. Many black women report similar incidents.

Unfortunately, the medical profession is hesitant to grapple with issues of race and racism. This reluctance stems in part from the illusion that medicine is a value-neutral profession. In fact, it reflects and even reinforces the beliefs, tensions, and power dynamics of the wider society. The "Jungle Fever" episode makes this painfully clear. Issues of race and racism are as pervasive and disturbing as they have ever been, and they must be challenged in all aspects of American life, including medicine. The stated goal of the Clinton plan, increased financial access to health care for all Americans, is important and admirable. Yet "race-blind" reform will at best only narrow but certainly not erase racial disparities in health care. □

Charlene A. Galarneau

MISSING PERSONS: UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

QUESTION: When does "universal" mean "all but 3.2 million"?

ANSWER: When it describes the actual coverage of U.S. residents for benefits under President Clinton's health reform proposal. The language of the Health Security Act is clear: the estimated 3.2 million "undocumented aliens" currently residing in the United States are "not eligible to obtain the comprehensive benefit package through enrollment in a health plan pursuant to this Act" (Section 1005, (a), 17). While the plan would significantly expand access to health care overall, the unqualified claims of "universality" that commonly are used to portray this plan mask this significant exclusion.

Generally speaking, "undocumented aliens" or "undocumented immigrants" are persons living in the United States without the approval of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Most live in a few states such as California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois, settling into households, neighborhoods, and jobs among persons of like ethnicity and national origin. Members of a single household or family often represent a variety of distinct immigration and citizenship statuses. Undocumented immigrants tend to avoid being identified as undocumented for fear of triggering INS deportation. As a result, their interactions with official social institutions, including medical facilities, are often cautious and minimal.

Although some undocumented immigrants have private health insurance, most work in low wage jobs without health insurance benefits. Medicaid covers some of them for restricted benefits, that

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is, for emergency care and labor/delivery services only. Some state Medicaid programs, such as those of New York and California, extend coverage to include prenatal care services. In short, most undocumented immigrants depend upon their personal financial resources and a tenuous patchwork of publicly-funded services for health care.

Public hospitals and community and migrant (farmworker) health centers are the principal facilities serving undocumented immigrants, with private physician practices and public health departments offering more limited preventive and primary care. Hospitals are legally bound to provide emergency care as well as labor and delivery services for pregnant women regardless of ability to pay, immigration status, etc. Historically, community and migrant health centers have offered primary health care services to local residents, particularly medically underserved residents, without concern for "alienage." All told, these programs do not come close to meeting the health care needs of the undocumented immigrant population. Comprehensive, culturally competent health care is unavailable to most undocumented immigrants. Preventive and primary health care is routinely deferred, relatively minor health problems become serious, and significant medical intervention becomes a necessity.

The president's health reform plan proposes a devastating scene of reduced and eliminated health care services and financing for this already underserved population. Despite little evidence for claims of present or future overutilization of health care services by undocumented immigrants, this plan recommends tortuous programmatic gymnastics in order to offer a very restricted set of services to them. Recent administration assertions that undocumented immigrants will continue to be served through hospitals and health centers, though excluded from the new managed care system, are contradicted by the short- and long-term implications of the plan itself. For example in the short term, the plan intends to set aside $1 billion annually for federally mandated emergency and maternity care. Yet it is estimated that $1 billion would not cover these hospital costs in California and Texas alone, not to mention in all fifty states. The concurrent elimination of the Medicaid eligibility system, which qualifies some people for emergency services, raises concerns about whether, they will in fact be covered.

The most serious long-term implication involves community and migrant health centers that would be designated "Essential Community Providers" and continue to receive federal grants for five years. The concern is that in year six this designation will expire and the health centers would be essentially mainstreamed into the larger system of health alliances and plans. As the proposal now stands, only "eligible individuals," not undocumented immigrants, would be able to participate in this system.

The tension between the plan's simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of undocumented immigrants creates a number of perverse potential consequences. Currently insured undocumented immigrants would lose their health insurance. Undocumented immigrants would pay taxes, and perhaps even wage-withheld premiums, to support a health care system in which they, unlike other residents, could not participate. Similarly, employers would be required to pay insurance premiums for undocumented employees who could not receive benefits. It appears that citizen children of undocumented parents would be denied the plan's comprehensive benefit package due to their parents' lack of insurance.

Once again undocumented immigrants would be marked by the *lack* of a card, in this case, a Health Security Card. The already common perception that a card will be needed in order to receive health care services will likely inhibit cardless persons from seeking care. Immigrant rights advocates fear, with reason, that this Health Security Card would become, de facto, a national identification card offering anything but security for undocumented immigrants. Exemplifying an increasingly common and morally problematic mix of health and immigration policies, several members of Congress have already suggested that a national health database could serve immigration control objectives.

The criticisms of the plan's exclusion of undocumented people are substantial: that it is "penny wise and pound foolish" to focus on emergency care; that partial population coverage sabotages the new system's cost control objectives; that germs

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are oblivious to immigration status and "public" health requires health care for the "public"; that health care is a fundamental human right irrespective of citizenship; that the government is abdicating its responsibility to help the needy, and so on. These serious economic, public health, and moral arguments have yet to be actively addressed by the administration or Congress.

The political difficulty of arguing on behalf of undocumented immigrants in today's virulent anti-immigrant atmosphere is certainly one reason for the silence of our political leaders. This loss of political will has quieted even those who have historically taken the lead in supporting health programs which serve all community residents. Unfortunately, the loudest voices today are found among the supporters of alternative health reform plans that generally offer *less* "universal" coverage than the Clinton plan.

Given the current shape of the health reform debate, it is highly unlikely that undocumented immigrants will be included, as other residents are included, in the reform package. The preservation of current services and funding, especially for such categorical programs as community and migrant health centers and hospital payments, is crucial not only for the obvious health reasons, but for keeping undocumented health care needs visible and the door open for their future full inclusion.

The issue of health care for undocumented immigrants reflects a set of fundamental questions about who "we" are as a political, moral and health care community. Who counts as members of this community and why? Are these distinct communities with distinct memberships? What benefits and responsibilities accompany membership? What is the nature of social justice in health care? Until "we" pull together the political and moral will to address these deeper questions publicly, honestly, and wisely, we will continue to thwart health care reform efforts by believing, for example, that "universal" means "all but 3.2 million." □

Harry C. Boyte and Nancy Kari

CITIZEN POLITICS

Breaking the Iron Cage

When asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life and began to dominate worldly morality . . . fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage. . . . Of this cultural development, it might well be said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."

Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

The Clinton administration has served the nation well by insisting upon the need for reform in our health system. But to date the debate reflects the dynamic described by Max Weber, through which a spreading pattern of technical rationality and expert-client relationships has hollowed out the civic culture of everyday life. If the conversation remains a technical one about what we get and how, concerned only with access, financing mechanisms, and cost containment, most people will be cast as consumers whose "power" consists of individual market choices. Given the huge vested interests of the health system, this will not generate the political energy necessary for major reform. The question is how to renew civic spirit.

Today's health system reflects the rise of specialized knowledge as the basic currency of public problem solving. Health care has been shaped by broad patterns of urbanization, the growth of the corporate economy, and the

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development of mass communications systems, all of which have undermined communal authorities and popular self-confidence about citizens' role in public affairs. Though they may actively demand solutions and services, most Americans also look to large systems and professional experts to provide them; they rarely see themselves as responsible, creative actors in any policy setting.

The decline of civic involvement in public life means that people lose a sense of their stake in society. Lively democratic politics is a give-and-take, messy, everyday process of public work through which citizens set about dealing with the problems of our common existence. Effective long-term problem solving requires robust civic participation—challenging the expert model for reasons of practicality as well as for reasons of equity and fairness.

The story of health care recounted by Paul Starr in *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* illustrates civic erosion. In nineteenth-century America medical and health practices included many contending and diverse strands, from home remedies, Native American medical traditions and popular healing practices to more formally credentialed medicine. Health providers necessarily worked *with* people rather than simply *on* them. Though popular and "nonofficial" medical practices have reemerged, they remain a subterranean, largely overlooked dimension of health care in the present debate. In Starr's terms, popular health practices have lost public authority.

Modern health systems grew from specific political and social dynamics as well as the broad tendency toward the rise of expert authority, patterns in higher education that increasingly privileged a "scientific" model of professional training and credentialing, doctors' own skillful self-organization, and the removal of health care from communal and informal settings to highly structured institutions. Scientific knowledge in health has brought great benefits, but reliance on expertise has also tilted the American health system strongly toward acute care rather than prevention and self-help. Thus, civic renewal in health has the double challenge of taking on the general problem of civic disengagement and the formidable institutions and ingrained patterns of action that render most people spectators of health care, consumers of services.

Despite erosion of public life, signs of civic ferment on health issues have begun to reappear. These include mushrooming networks that support self-help and mutual aid, community prevention campaigns, and wider public discussions about the need for a balance between common sense and technology on questions such as the prolongation of life.

In Project Public Life, a grass-roots civic organizing and education project that is part of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs (University of Minnesota), we have seen ordinary people bring about change in their institutions and communities in relation to health in a variety of environments.

The Lazarus Project

A nursing home setting vividly illustrates how civic action can affect the issues that must be addressed if democratization of our health care system is to be achieved. Nursing homes dramatize our inability as a society to deal in public fashion with issues surrounding infirmity and death. They embody our tendency to cede authority to experts and to institutionalized services. Efforts at civic reform in nursing homes offer insights for the reintroduction of civic agency in health.

The Lazarus Project is a four-year-old effort to develop an alternative to the medical and therapeutic models that typically govern decision making in nursing homes. It was undertaken by the Augustana Home in partnership with Project Public Life. Augustana is a large Lutheran nursing home in Minneapolis that employes an administrator, fifteen managers, and five hundred staff members for its three hundred and seventy residents. The nursing home is associated with a larger campus of four hundred apartments in four adjoining high rise buildings. Augustana is a not-for-profit organization whose revenue sources are largely Medicare and Medicaid. The effort was funded

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through a capital campaign in 1989 that had as one of its goals to build a more "empowering community."

The Lazarus Project has sought to create an alternative "public community" that integrates civic concepts into the everyday work of staff and residents. The project has demonstrated that even within highly structured, hierarchical environments such as nursing homes, staff, family members, and frail elderly residents are willing to take on more substantial roles in decision making and problem solving in order to shape the environments in which they live or work. It illustrates the energy and power of public life, even where least expected.

There are immense barriers to individual and collective agency within the therapeutic cultures of long-term care institutions. Nursing homes vary according to size, urban or rural location, and affiliation with a community or ethnic or religious tradition. Yet generally they have a stark, institutional quality that reinforces regimentation and dependency. In these service systems, roles are generally categorized in two ways. Care providers' primary function is to serve the residents. In contrast, residents (defined these days, in the language of Total Quality Management, as "customers") are the recipients of services; their lot is to express satisfaction or grievance.

Feelings of powerlessness pervade nursing homes. Although these facilities provide long-term rehabilitation for men and women who eventually return to their homes, the majority of residents are frail elders, increasingly incapacitated, who remain in residential care until they die. Augustana has traditionally been a site for retirement of relatively healthy older people and continues to have many people who are not incapacitated. But its population, like that of other homes, has shifted in recent years toward those who are infirm and disabled. About 20 percent of current admissions are designated as "terminal," which means that the residents are expected to die within thirty days.

The move to a nursing home is often a traumatic life transition, perceived as a "last stop." For many, this is the first experience in institutional living. "I don't know any other institutions you would be in, other than the army, where you are as regimented as you are in a nursing home," observed Pam Hayle, director of therapeutic activities at Augustana. Government regulations and traditions combine to constrain residents and staff alike to narrow, scripted patterns of interaction.

For many residents, this first experience in institutional living comes after a life dedicated to "serving others." In Augustana, 85 percent of the residents are women; many come from working-class backgrounds, where their public work involved church, community, and home-making. A therapeutic culture sees people in terms of their needs, not their capacities; it leaves little room for residents to make contributions to the setting. The basic struggle for residents is to learn how to live within the system.

For staff, a common goal is to "empower clients," but empowerment is conceived in individual and psychological terms, a condition one can "give" to another. The paradox is that as caregivers seek to establish nurturing, caring relationships, their very intensity reinforces staff control. For instance, decision-making authority about residents is typically claimed by the staff members who "care" the most for residents. Staff describe how working with "my residents" fills emotional needs "to be appreciated" and "to make a difference in someone's life." The intimate quality of such relationships, in the absence of more public practices, generates an obligation on the part of the resident, who is expected to respond with appreciation.

Staff members themselves express frustration at their inability to deal effectively with increasing demands for physical and emotional care. Their own sense of powerlessness, compounded by pressure to avoid mistakes in their work, limits their ability to experiment and take risks, to recognize the messy, ambiguous nature of much public work, to imagine change or to assume new roles. Many feel overwhelmed by the needs of increasingly frail elders. More broadly, the regulatory environment emphasizes standardized, unimaginative actions. More than six hundred federal

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and state regulations aim at "creating empowering communities." Yet the intrinsic nature of bureaucratic regulations is at odds with the particularities of individuals and environments; their lack of attention to context thwarts innovation and creativity.

Against such a background Lazarus Project has asked, "Can staff, families, and residents learn broader civic identities and assume new roles in helping to create their environments?" At the heart of the Lazarus strategy has been an approach to leadership development adapted from the most effective strategies in community organizing. Such an approach stresses the importance of ongoing discussion about core civic ideas, deepened and integrated as people apply them in daily work. Concepts include politics itself, public spaces and their difference from private environments, the diversity of interests, and power conceived as interactive and relational.

This approach to leadership development is different from most organizing training, which stresses techniques and skills (how to chair meetings, write leaflets, put on public hearings, and so on). Teaching civic concepts develops competence in critical thinking, debate, and reflection. More subtly but perhaps most important, it generates the kind of robust political self-confidence that has been lost in modern life, but which is especially critical to any process of democratizing information and service environments. Skilled conceptual thinking about politics conveys the simple but transformative message that ordinary people as well as those who are credentialed as experts can think well and seriously; it testifies that people can be theorists of their everyday experience and of the larger world.

Civic concepts are especially difficult to introduce and bring to life in a nursing home. The focus is on care, nurturance, and rehabilitation, not on solving common problems. Yet the introduction of civic concepts can also work dramatic change. However much it goes against the grain, staff, family, and residents also desire a more open, public process of conversation that brings difficult problems to the surface, instead of suppressing them.

A poignant example occurred early in the project, when a chaplain intern remarked to a joint committee of residents and staff that it was hard for her to see so many people die. Augustana, like most nursing homes, avoided open discussion of death. Staff had been convinced that the subject would unduly upset residents. Yet in this session an earlier discussion of the concept of public spaces as arenas for talking about difficult problems led to a breaking of the silence. Residents responded, "We know the topic is hard for the staff; that's why we don't talk about it. But to us it seems a natural part of the process of moving into a nursing home."

A serious conversation about death developed. Some staff thought that discussion of death might threaten the image that Augustana wished to project, as a place for living. But residents talked about wishing to be in charge of the process of dying, even if this meant not complying with staff expectations or rules. In response, staff spoke of their anxiety when what they thought of as "best possible care" conflicted with resident wishes.

The committee convened a large public forum to discuss death and dying, with staff, residents, and others connected to the nursing home participating. Many recommendations emerged for changes in community rituals related to death. Perhaps most important, the public discussions helped establish a more open process in which residents and staff alike ask questions, share stories, and discuss struggles with dying. This greater openness has infused many staff, resident, and family interactions. "There's more conversation now," said Kathryn Kading, director of nursing at Augustana. Ways to develop rituals and richer conversations about death and dying are now incorporated into Augustana's planning process.

In other instances, too, people at Augustana have experienced an enhanced sense of power in situations that otherwise render them helpless. The way residents and staff addressed a near-universal nursing home complaint—slow staff response to resident "call lights"—illustrated this pattern. Grievances about re-

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sponse times normally result simply in unanswered demands for increased staffing. Yet in this case, residents organized public forums to discuss the use of call lights to summon help, involving staff and residents alike. The forums provided space to air varying points of view and to generate solutions that neither staff nor residents alone had imagined. Most important, they dealt with deeper issues for which there are no easy solutions, such as feelings of dependency and overwhelming responsibilities. Talking about these led to more effective use of call lights by residents and more attentiveness by staff.

Augustana has not undergone a complete transformation as a result of the Lazarus Project, but it has seen notable changes. Departments such as nursing and therapeutic activities now have much more open negotiations about issues such as staffing patterns and hours. The therapeutic activites department has openly debated how to distribute allotments for salary increases. New staff get much more explanation of the reasons for patterns of staffing, and supervisors report higher morale. Managers have sought a less personalized and cautious style of interaction, showing that one can disagree in public and still maintain respectful relationships.

Civic Organizing

The challenge of citizen politics in health settings is how the different actors—providers, regulators, educators, those cast as clients, family, or community members—can develop more collaborative practices. Changes in roles and identities are required, as well as changes in institutional arrangements.

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. . . . Power concedes nothing without demand, it never did and never will," Frederick Douglass once observed. Democratic change in health settings necessarily involves conflict and difficulty. Yet power relationships in health settings are different than in most environments familiar to progressives through labor or community organizing or advocacy campaigns. Authority in health resides in knowledge often assiduously acquired, which cannot quickly or simply be transferred. Confrontation alone can rarely bring about lasting change. Strategies for democratization need to include more than conflict and struggle. The importance of creating larger civic contexts in which people can rethink their actions, clear in the Lazarus Project, is relevant to health issues more generally.

Today, advocates of reform in professional health education and practice address the power dynamics of expert-client relations from the provider side. Strict reliance on discipline-specific principles, they argue, can thwart professionals' own aspirations toward problem solving, effectiveness, and craft. Reformers call instead for a new professional practice that involves a more reciprocal relationship between client and practitioner. This requires the development of generalist abilities to work across disciplines, with a variety of community interests, in a collaborative style, with more attentiveness to specific contexts.

The Lazarus Project has illustrated the importance of framing changes in providers' roles within more public contexts. The dilemma for professional reform is not simply how to increase skills but also how to change identities: as in other professions, health providers learn to derive their status, visibility, and material rewards—their public goods—from what are essentially private reference groups of fellow professionals. Intellectual historian Thomas Bender has described this as the shift from the nineteenth-century "civic professional," who interacted with a hetereogeneous public in the civic culture of particular places, to the "disciplinary professionalism" of today.

From the beginning the Lazarus Project made many connections to wider publics. Activist groups and leading reformers in nursing home care were tied to the experiment, as well as educators, researchers, and regulators. Through conferences, training sessions, and public discussions, staff at Augustana interacted with others in the Project Public Life network who were undertaking civic organizing initiatives in widely diverse settings, from 4-H

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members to school teachers, from low-income parents to public service employees. Such experiences and ties created a civic stage for work at Augustana.

The Lazarus Project also has lessons for grass-roots community action. On the consumer side, community action groups often take up health issues—environmental questions such as toxic waste and lead paint, preventive campaigns such as childhood immunization or teen drug and alcohol use. Moreover, the best community organizing has posed citizen capacity-building as a central theme. In strong community organizations today, an extensive political education is crucial: what people learn out of any particular campaign about power relationships, accountability, negotiation, public presentation, and understanding of the diversity of interests and perspectives is as important as resolution of the issue itself. Groups that have made civic competence central, such as Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in the barrios of San Antonio, East Brooklyn Churches in New York, or Shelby County Interfaith in Memphis, Tennessee, have dramatically affected local development patterns, taxes, housing, health care, and many other policies. But their success rests upon keeping in focus a framework larger than specific issues. "After the first year, we realized that the issues were the dessert, not the main meal," recounted Andres Sarabia, first president of the COPS group in San Antonio. The main meal was what people were learning about grass-roots politics.

From the perspective of democratizing health care, community organizing also has limits. Its point is to build "power organizations" that involve large numbers of people and have an impact on centers of political and economic power. Community groups characteristically come at service institutions from the outside, as advocates and protestors, rather than as agents for change in the authority structure of health care itself.

Yet there are growing challenges to professional authority as well. The Pew Health Professions Commission's extensive sifting of polling data on health issues over the past thirty years shows a notable shift. Through the seventies, people expected their health to be taken care of by experts; beginning in the eighties, there was a strong countertrend showing support for civic agency in many forms. An array of self-help organizations, independent residential centers organized by and for people with disabilities, and women's health projects express this trend. Such groups have challenged the professional monopoly of power and authority, seeking to relocate authority for health care to "amateurs" and to those with health problems themselves.

Self-help efforts draw important attention to the healing capacities of those with disabilities and to the power of mutual support and communal contexts for achieving independence. The problem is that their stance is that of protest, looking at medical authority as simple usurpation: issues tend to get posed in Manichaean terms reminiscent of sixties' protests. Such a stance has generated a wide focus on patients' rights within institutional health settings, on the view that people need protection from the system, but it does little to democratize the system. By itself, a rights approach can lead to an increasingly dense regulatory environment that further limits innovation and experimentation.

For all their strengths, both community organizing and self-help groups largely neglect strategies for changing the roles and power relationships within health provider organizations themselves. Yet Project Public Life has found that the conceptual framework of "citizen politics" allows ordinary people and health institutions alike to develop new roles, identities, and power relationships around major issues.

For instance, Communities Mobilized for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), a joint project on teenage alcohol use in seven counties of Minnesota and Wisconsin—undertaken with the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Minnesota—differs from customary campaigns on such issues, which mainly target individuals for "education" about the deleterious consequences of drinking. It also differs from a newer approach, which seeks to mobilize communities around policy changes devised by professionals. In CMCA, strategy

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teams represent a wide array of community interests, including young people, who spend considerable time in defining what "the problem" of underage drinking is in the context of their specific communities. CMCA has found that citizens are eager to be challenged to see their own roles in broad and multidimensional ways. Marie Klinghagen, an organizer for CMCA in Hutchineson, Minnesota, observes that "people feel very left out of government and public problem solving today. Though they may have answers and insights, no one has asked them. So the usual coffeeshop talk is about the stupidity of government, schools, police, courts, and so forth. Citizen politics confronts their inaction because it gives them a way to do something, and helps them appreciate having experts available [as 'on tap, not on top'] rather than making fun of them."

In St. Louis, Miaisha Mitchell, community affairs director at Central Medical Center, an acute care, historically black hospital in the inner city, similarly found wide responsiveness to the civic organizing approach of Project Public Life when she attempted to change the hospital's relationship to the community. Mitchell was able to involve dozens of community organizations, from African-American sororal and fraternal groups to churches to Alcoholics Anonymous, in community outreach efforts on preventive health. She developed an initiative called "The Saturday School for Children Program," which involved teenagers' learning and also teaching concepts such as public and private, power, self-interest, and citizenship, and applying organizing strategies to issues that they have a stake in, such as drug use and teen pregnancy.

Such experiences illustrate new possibilities for health reform. The health reform debate needs to engage people far more deeply about the civic roles and responsibilities we all will have to take on as members of families, communities, and the nation. Citizenship, taken seriously, involves responsible public action. And health addresses profound questions of our lives and our society: how we deal with aging, infirmity, violence, environmental health hazards, our power over our own destinies, death itself. To create a workable health system in both the short and longer term means we will have to move from the question, "What's in it for me?" to an understanding of what we can accomplish by collective action. Democracy, understood as the renewal of a vibrant public life that can break apart Weber's iron cage, must come to health environments if we are to make lasting progress toward creating a genuinely healthy society. □

The authors appreciate the help and insight of a number of readers, including especially Gil Cleary, Pam Hayle, Peg Michels, and Michael Walzer.

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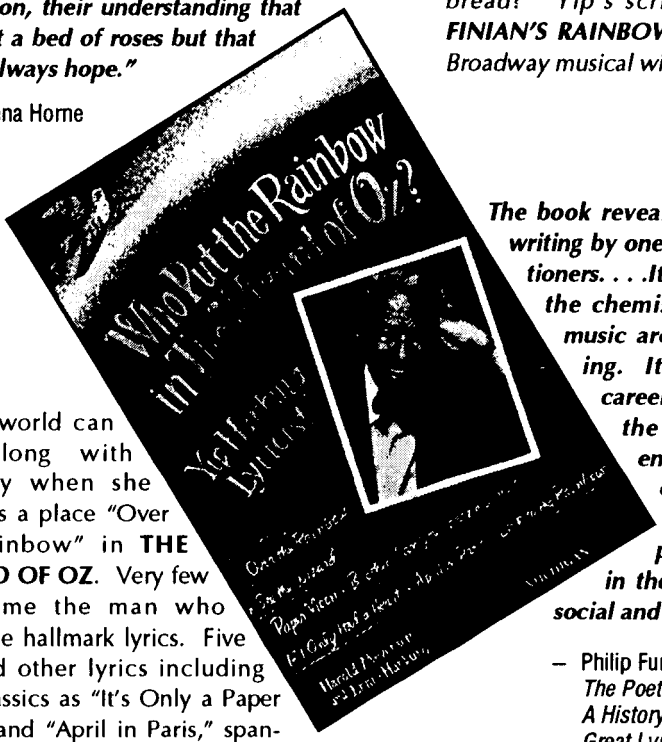
– Lena Horne



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– Philip Furia Author of
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GREEN POLITICS

Edited by James B. Rule

With this issue, *Dissent* inaugurates a new concern with the politics of the environment. The following essays have been specially commissioned to broach this theme, as have additional ones that will appear in the Summer issue. Thereafter, we expect to carry articles on these topics regularly.

The environment is not a standard theme for the political left. In its classic thinking, the left has most often viewed the future of humanity as turning on outcomes of essentially political struggles—capital versus labor, for example, or democracy versus authoritarianism, or egalitarianism versus hierarchy. Starting from such views, it requires a bit of reconsideration to acknowledge that the most momentous developments in coming decades could well stem from the relationship between human beings and the nonhuman environment.

To be sure, political struggle and environmental action are hardly exclusive. And the left shares some basic assumptions with the environmental movement—the revulsion at leaving important resource allocations to the tender mercies of private capital, for example, or the insistence on creating a voice for interests not represented in existing political processes.

But the concerns of the democratic left do not always "map" onto those of environmental activism in any easy or automatic way. Sometimes programs of environmental protection fly in the face of populist sentiments. Sometimes needs for jobs appear to run a collision course with interests in protecting a species, a place, or a resource. Sometimes the concerns of environmentalists are cast as elite tastes indulged at the expense of the broad public.

We do not believe that these antinomies are absolute or unresolvable. On the contrary, our work is to explore how they may be reconciled. We want to build a case that concern for the long-term quality and sustainability of life on the planet fits well with democratic and egalitarian politics. We want to identify approaches to environmental action that direct its benefits at least as much to the least privileged as to those on top. To do these things, we need to conceive new directions and possibilities for political and environmental action—new alliances, new tactics, new interpretations of interest.

The following articles confront the politics of the environment from quite different directions. Robert Proctor's essay on cancer surveys the struggles to comprehend, and to allocate responsibility for, what has been regarded as the ultimate symptom of human tampering with the

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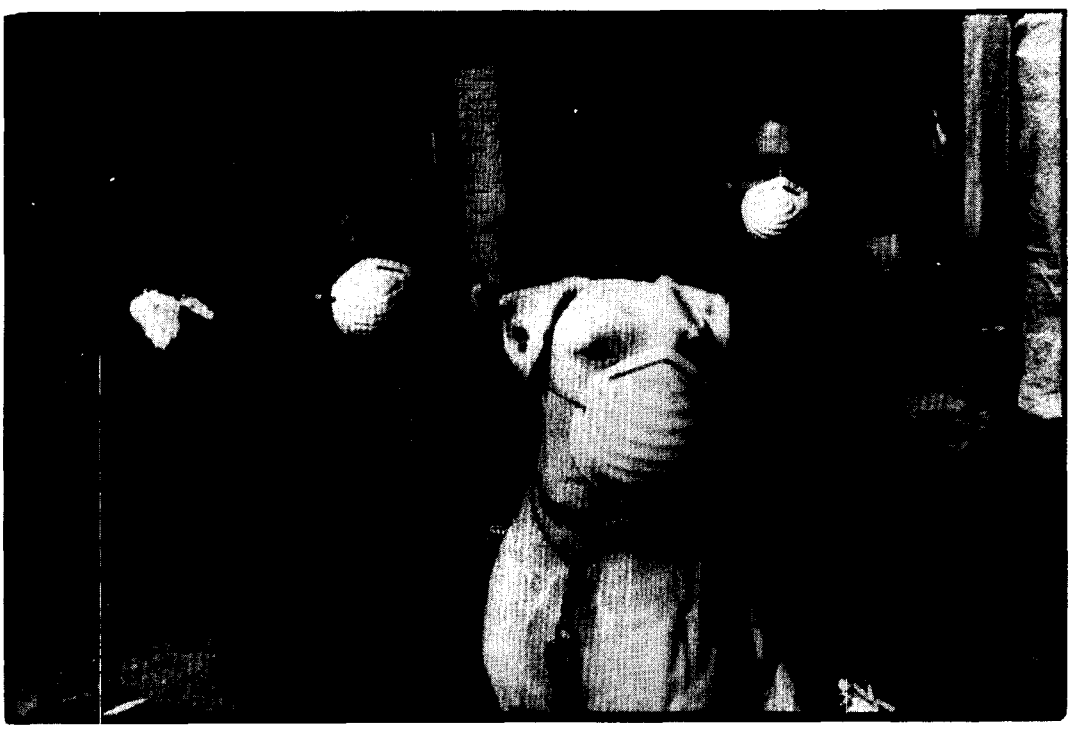
environment. Ruth Rosen analyzes the unequal exposure of the most vulnerable Americans to environmental harm—and thus reminds us that environmental politics are never far removed from the grittier realities of social stratification. And the two articles on the German Green party—one by David Kramer, the other by Christian Joppke and Andrei Markovits—take a hard, critical look at the most successful, if sometimes quixotic, venture of environmental activists into instutitional politics.

We do not aim, in these or subsequent articles, at any sort of "party line." We expect that the views and proposals you will find here will be as diverse and contentious as on other topics covered in *Dissent*.

We have no master plan for where these discussions must lead, but we take pleasure in opening them here.

—J.B.R. □



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Robert N. Proctor

THE POLITICS OF CANCER

More than a thousand people die of cancer every day in the United States. For every American alive today, one in three will contract the disease; one in five will die from it. Cancer is the plague of the twentieth century, second only to heart disease as a cause of death in most industrial nations. Although most other diseases are on the decline, cancer is on the rise. The trend has been building for some time: Roswell Park, a New York physician, noted as early as 1899 that cancer was "now the only disease which is steadily upon the increase." That year, cancer claimed about 30,000 U.S. lives. In 1994, cancer will kill more than fifteen times that many: 538,000 according to American Cancer Society projections. If present trends continue, cancer will become the first world's leading cause of death sometime in the twenty-first century. It is already the number one cause of death in Japan.

The tragedy is magnified by the fact that the causes of cancer are largely known—and have been known for quite some time. Cancer is caused by bad habits, bad working conditions, bad government, and bad luck, the latter including such things as the luck of the genetic draw and the culture into which one is born.[1]

Geographical and occupational differences give us clues as to what causes cancer. Cancer of the mouth is common among the peoples of India and southeast Asia, who chew betel nuts and tobacco leaves. Asbestos workers suffer cancers of the lungs and gut; dye workers suffer cancers of the bladder and stomach. Cervical cancer is rare in nuns, but is quite common in prostitutes. Bowel cancer is rare in countries where meat is not a regular part of the diet and where large amounts of fiber are consumed. Mormons, whose religious beliefs forbid them to smoke or to drink alcohol, coffee, or tea, die of cancer 20 percent less often than do non-Mormons. The Japanese vulnerability to stomach cancer—that nation's leading cancer killer—probably derives from their consumption of large amounts of pickled, burned, and high-salt foods cooked with soybean pastes and sauces. Liver cancer is especially common in Africa and in Guam, because the foods in those places are often contaminated with aflatoxin, a potent fungal toxin. In the United States, African Americans suffer significantly higher rates of death from nearly every form of cancer than do whites (skin cancer being the only notable exception), though studies have shown that it is poverty—rather than race—that is the root cause of the difference. First world poverty is surely one of the most potent of all carcinogens.

Cancer, in other words, is not a constant of the human condition but a product of the substances to which we are exposed at home or at work, the life-styles we lead. Cancer is a historical disease in at least two separate senses: *theories* of what causes cancer change over time, but so do the *causes* at work in carcinogenesis.

Theories of what causes cancer have included virtually every known vice and every known virtue. A very short list would include humoral imbalances, hereditary predispositions, sunshine, obesity, syphilis, female sex hormones, radiation, tomatoes, tarred roads, grief and anxiety, drinking from iron pipes, arsenic, affluence, poverty, sexual abstinence, sexual promiscuity, and water derived from streams in which trout are abundant.

But cancer is also historical in the sense that

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what actually causes cancer changes over time. Pipe smoking was first recognized as a cause of lip cancer in 1761, two centuries after Raleigh's transatlantic transport of tobacco. Percivall Pott, an English physician, described soot-induced scrotal cancer among London's chimney sweeps in 1775—and there is reason now to suspect that the shift from wood to coal as the primary fuel for English cooking and heating was at least partly to blame. In 1900, women died of cancer far more often than men; today, it is men who die more often than women, and tobacco is the primary cause of this reversal of fortunes. Two-pack-a-day smokers increase their risk of lung cancer by about twenty times. The World Health Organization estimates that about three million people are killed by cigarettes every year worldwide; that number is expected to grow to about ten million per year in the early decades of the next century. Who gets cancer, where and how, in short, is a cultural artifact.

Such knowledge as we have of causes, however, has done surprisingly little to aid us in our search for solutions. Notwithstanding repeated and glowing pronouncements from the American Cancer Society, cancer treatment has made little progress since Richard Nixon declared war on the disease in 1971. Five-year survival rates for the majority of cancers (lung, colon, breast, and stomach, for example) remain essentially what they were twenty years ago—despite more than $25 billion spent on research by the National Cancer Institute. A 1991 study released by the institute showed that although people diagnosed with cancer do generally live somewhat longer (51 percent now live five years or more, compared with 49 percent in the mid-1970s), part of this meager improvement is due to a statistical sleight of hand: people who used to die four years after diagnosis may now die after five, the "improvement" due to the discovery of their cancer a year earlier than used to be the case.

Even where survival rates really have improved, this may or may not have to do with the treatment patients receive. Chemotherapy has dramatically increased the life expectancy of children diagnosed with leukemia, and Hodgkin's disease and testicular cancer are now quite treatable. Malignant melanoma is nearly 100 percent curable if detected early, and many lymphomas respond well to chemotherapy. But the outlook is not so sanguine for the really big killers. Ninety-five percent of all lung cancers still prove fatal, regardless of what form of treatment one chooses. The *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1984 reported that people with colon cancer—America's second largest cancer killer (after lung)—who receive chemotherapy alongside surgical removal of tumors did not live any longer than people who receive no chemotherapy. The study also found that chemotherapy actually increased the risk of leukemia. Similar doubts have been raised concerning surgery and radiation—the other two legs of the therapeutic triad (also known as poison, slash, and burn). Even X-ray mammography turns out to be both more and less than advertised: for women under the age of forty, for example, there are probably as many tumors caused by the procedure as are detected and cured as a result of it. The X-ray levels used in standard mammography have declined in recent years, but criticisms are still raised that too many younger women, and not enough older women, are being screened.

In consequence of these gloomy findings, it has become hard to deny that the war against cancer is being lost. This was the conclusion of an article published in the 1986 *New England Journal of Medicine* by John Bailar and Elaine Smith. Stanford University president Donald Kennedy expressed a somewhat stronger view when he called America's cancer campaign "a medical Vietnam." James Watson, co-discoverer of the DNA double-helix and one of the nation's most widely respected scientists, simply called it "a bunch of shit."

What is going on here? How can one of the largest medical efforts in history have proved so futile? Why, if cancer is so obviously a product of things like smoking, radon, and the "industrial way of life," has so little been done to solve the problem at its roots? Is it really the case that, as Samuel Epstein suggested fifteen years ago in his *Politics of Cancer*, "While

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much is known about the science of cancer, its prevention depends largely, if not exclusively, on political action"?

Seas of Controversy

I'm writing a book on what causes cancer—focusing especially on the politics behind what we know and don't know about the disease.* There is controversy virtually everywhere one looks: over the role of life-style and occupation in the genesis of cancer; over the role of stress, personality factors, and "natural carcinogens" in things like beer, barbecue, and bruised broccoli. No one really knows how serious is the hazard posed by radon gas seeping into basements or by electromagnetic fields from high-voltage wires and household appliances. Do cellular phones cause brain cancer? What about the cosmic rays absorbed while flying during sunspot activity, when the radiation one receives in an hour can exceed that allowed for nuclear workers in a year? How bad is it to eat Brazil nuts, the most radioactive natural food, or to dust a baby's bottom with Talcum power, which naturally contains asbestos?

I say no one knows, but it would be more precise to say that in most such matters there are islands of agreement separated by deep seas of controversy. Evidence accumulates that chlorinated water causes bladder cancer, but the Chlorine Institute, a trade association, disputes that evidence. Hair colorings are suspected of causing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, but that too is disputed. Bruce Ames of Berkeley has generated endless controversy with his contention that peanut butter and barbecued meats contain potent carcinogens, and that drinking a single glass of wine is thousands of times more hazardous than pesticide contaminated water. Doubts have been raised about whether the hazards of dioxin have been exaggerated, whether all or only one kind of asbestos (amphibole) is dangerous, whether industrial life is as perilous as we are often led to believe.

Tempers run high in such debates, because much is at stake. Environmental groups depend to a certain extent on public fears to solicit funds, and manufacturers stand to gain or to lose from whether and to what extent a given chlorinated or halogenated hydrocarbon is judged a public health hazard. Cancer research itself is a very big business, and the research establishment has vested interests in particular kinds of approaches rather than others.

The interests at stake, in other words, are complex and sometimes shifting. Even "industry interests" are not what they used to be. Billion-dollar industries have sprung up to "abate" or "remediate" environmental hazards such as asbestos, lead, and radon, and much of the industry of the twenty-first century will probably be devoted to cleaning up the industry of the twentieth. (In 1988, for example, the General Accounting Office estimated that the cost of cleaning up the nation's twenty-eight nuclear bomb plants and testing facilities alone could be as high as $175 billion.) The commercialization of environmental troubles has led to unprecedented stakes in the exaggeration or diminution of environmental hazards, the net result being that experts commonly disagree about what is a hazard and what is a risk. Strange as it may seem, there is not even a well-defined consensus concerning whether overall cancer rates are on the rise. Environmentalists like Devra Lee Davis argue that brain and several other cancers are rapidly increasing; Richard Doll and other "cancer conservatives" claim that the increases can be explained by reference to improved diagnostics and access to medical care.

What is strange to a historian is that many of these same debates have been going on for more than a century. As early as 1843, Stanislas Tanchou, physician to the king in Paris, presented statistics to prove that cancer was on the rise. Cancer for Tanchou and his followers was a "disease of civilization": more common in towns than in the countryside, in Europe than in Africa, among domesticated than among wild animals, and so forth. Medical missionaries and frontier doctors for the rest of the century tried to prove that cancer was absent or rare among the Athapaskans of

* *What Causes Cancer? The Politics Behind What We Know and Don't Know* (Basic Books, in press).

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Canada, the Inuit of the Arctic, the Hunza of the Himalayas, and other purported primitives. Skeptics charged the investigators with having ignored the fact that societies such as these may simply not have had the medical services required to evidence death by cancer.

Lurking behind much of the present discussion is a similar question of whether environmental degradation is really as unhealthy as environmentalists have made it out to be. Especially since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, we have heard that the risks posed by toxic contaminants have been exaggerated: that the widely publicized "alar scare" of 1989, for example, was hysterical media-hype fostered by power-hungry environmentalists, that fear of chemicals may do more harm than the agents feared. We have witnessed the medicalization of environmental protest, so that the fear of living near an environmental hazard is now labeled a mental illness, amid growing talk of things like fiber phobia, fumaphobia, radiophobia, chemophobia, nosophobia, riskophobia, and so forth.

General Principles

Let me stand back from particular controversies for a moment and say something about methodology. The central questions of what I like to call "political philosophy of science" include the following:

1. *Why do we know what we know, and why don't we know what we don't know?* There is a great deal of talk about the "culture of science," but where is there discussion of the "cultivation of ignorance"? If the politics of science consists (among other things) in the structure of research priorities, then it is important to understand what gets studied and why, but also what does *not* get studied and why not. One has, in other words, to study the "social construction of ignorance." The persistence of controversy is often not a natural consequence of imperfect knowledge but a political consequence of conflicting interests and structural apathies. Controversy is often engineered; ignorance and uncertainty are manufactured, maintained, and disseminated.

2. *Who gains from knowledge (or ignorance!) of a particular sort and who loses?* Scientists and science mongers often speak royally about how "we" know this or that—but who is that *we* and why does it know what is knows? What, for example, is the connection—if any—between the fact that 90 percent of cancer researchers are males, and that men predominate as subjects in clinical trials for cancer drugs? Why are the cancers that affect men better understood than cancers that affect women?[2] Who does science and who gets science done to them? What or whom is knowledge for, and what or whom is it against?

3. *How might knowledge be different, and how should knowledge be different?* What are the virtues of looking at ultimate rather than proximate causes, for example, or of seeking prevention rather than cure? What are the social responsibilities of the cancer theorist or, for that matter, of the social science theorist?

Questions such as these are self-consciously political and ethical; they take us beyond the merry-go-round of realism vs. relativism that plagues so much of recent science studies discourse. They require that we entertain a broader notion of science than is common coinage among positivists, postpositivists (notably Kuhn), and some of the more passive social constructivists. Science has a face, a house, and a price: one has to ask who is doing science, in what institutional context, and at what cost. Understanding such things can give us insight into why scientific tools are sharp for certain kinds of problems and dull for others—it might also help us to see why the war against cancer is going so badly.

How does one put such ideas into practice? Let me give two examples: the life and times of Wilhelm C. Hueper and the story of trade associations. The first illustrates the power of the state to intervene in this area; the second, the power of economic agents to rule you, fool you, and make you rest assured.

Wilhelm C. Hueper's suppression by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in the 1950s is surely one of the most dramatic and consequential examples of U.S. state-sponsored censorship. Hueper was head of the

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Environmental Cancer Section of the National Cancer Institute from 1948 to 1964, and was celebrated by Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring* as "the father of environmental carcinogenesis." In 1948 he had begun a project to document lung cancers among the uranium miners of the Colorado plateau, but his efforts were stymied by the AEC's director of biology and medicine, who ordered him to delete all references to uranium mining at a scientific meeting he planned to attend. Hueper protested the order and was thereupon barred from all epidemiological work on occupational cancer, ironically, in the same year that the National Institutes of Health's chief of research—Hueper's own boss—was trumpeting the freedom of science. Hueper later complained that censorship of his and other studies had delayed measures to remedy the situation, leaving countless men to die who could have been saved.

The same was true, interestingly, in other countries, such as East Germany and Czechoslovakia, which had their own Huepers and many more victims kept in the dark. I traveled to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1992 to examine archives pertaining to the 1879 discovery of the so-called *Schneeberger Krankheit* (uranium mine-induced lung cancer); what I found was that more people have died from the disease since the 1950s than in the previous five hundred years of the mines' operation. The famous Joachimsthal mines were reopened by Soviet occupation authorities soon after the Second World War, following a secret agreement of November 23, 1945 that granted the Soviets exclusive rights to all uranium produced in the country. Vladimir Rericha, the chief epidemiologist at the Czechoslovakian Health Institute of the Uranium Industry, told me that he and his colleagues had shown that Czech uranium miners were dying from lung cancer at about five times the rate of coal miners. Rericha tried to publish his findings in 1966, but was barred from doing so by the State Security Police. Czech security authorities were purportedly afraid that from uranium health statistics one could calculate uranium production levels and the quality of uranium being mined. The cynicism of such a ban was made apparent in 1970, when the administrative chief of all Czech uranium mining—Karel Bocek—defected to West Germany. Rericha requested and was again refused permission to publish; one can only conclude that Czech authorities feared that revelation of the sacrifice of its miners for Soviet atomic power might not sit well with the Czech populace.[3]

Rericha provided me with details on the number of miners and their lung cancer rates, but there was a part of the story that even he didn't know about. One of his colleagues at the Health Institute led me to papers from the newly-opened state security archives describing conditions at seventeen "uranium mine concentration camps" established in the late 1940s and early 1950s to work the mines. Thousands of political prisoners labored in these camps: 64 in 1946 (all Germans, presumably Nazis); 5,500 in 1950; culminating at 11,816 in 1953. Prisoners worked the hottest ores.

The cold war quest for national security claimed lives on both sides of the Iron Curtain; state authorities on both sides engineered cancer clusters and then silenced efforts to expose and ameliorate those clusters.

"Doubt is Our Product"

There are forty thousand trade associations in the United States, the primary purpose of which is to do in aggregate what a single firm is often unable or unwilling to do—take the heat, respond to the press, coordinate product safety and legal research, and so forth. Many such groups have been formed in response to specific regulatory proposals: When the National Academy of Sciences published a review of evidence linking breast and colon cancer to the consumption of meat, the American Meat Institute organized a coalition of dairy, poultry, and livestock associations to discredit the charges. When the *New England Journal of Medicine* published evidence that caffeine causes pancreatic cancer, the National Coffee Association responded with a position paper refuting the charges. The Calorie Control Council kept saccharin on the market after it was shown to cause cancer in rats; the Chlorine Institute has helped to rescue the reputation of

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dioxin, and the American Council on Science and Health even manages to claim that a little bit of dioxin is good for you.

The dollars behind these "Hertz rent-a-scientists"—as *Time* magazine has christened them—are often substantial.[4] The Council for Tobacco Research is one of the largest private supporters of medical research in the world, having spent about $200 million for this purpose since the 1950s, resulting in the publication of more than three thousand scientific articles. The American Industrial Health Council is a leading advocate of "go-slow" policies in the area of environmental regulation—as is the Synthetic Organic Chemicals Manufacturers Association, a consortium of twenty-one associations ranging from the Silicones Health Council to the Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether Task Force. All use science as a form of public relations: all prove the verity of Gibson's Law—I refer of course to the principle that "For every Ph.D. there's an equal and opposite Ph.D."

Trade associations such as these make it their business to exploit, disseminate, and, if need be, produce uncertainty in the area of environmental carcinogenesis. This has important consequences for public perceptions of science. The production and management of uncertainty has facilitated what one might call the "MacNeil-Lehrerization of science": the media display of equal and opposing views on apparently settled questions, generating the sense that endlessly "more research" is needed to resolve guilt or innocence in questions of carcinogenesis.

Bias in such cases, though, is more subtle than is commonly imagined. The Tobacco Institute can support "good" medical research, but the hoped-for effect may be good will toward the industry. A chemical manufacturer may promote research into the hazards of a hydrocarbon, but the hoped-for effect may be to insinuate ambiguity and thereby delay regulation. A lead-zinc trade association may call for more study of the effects of lead on intelligence, but the main goal may be to raise doubts about evidence of a health risk.

Bias in such efforts does not necessarily mean that the science is bogus: support even of "good science" may assist an industry in deflecting attention from the hazards of a product—as when the Council for Tobacco Research promotes genetics research. I call this the "smoke-screen effect"—the effort to jam the scientific air waves with true but trivial work, the net effect of which is to distract from what is going on underneath. Bias in such cases lies typically not in the falsification of research but rather in the diversion of attention from one problem to another—from causes onto mechanisms, for example, or from questions of public health onto questions of free speech. Bias also emerges, however, from the fetishization of certain of the self-avowed idols of conventional science. Science requires empirical verification, but the rabid distrust of a well-founded hypothetical can be used to dismiss a plausible point (as when animal evidence of carcinogenicity is dismissed by industry-financed skeptics). Science seeks to reduce uncertainty—but the demand that regulators hold back until all uncertainty is eliminated can be used as an excuse to do nothing.

The manufacture and distribution of uncertainty is, I would suggest, an insufficiently recognized social function of science. (As one tobacco company puts it: "Doubt is our product.") Philosophers have not yet focused on science as an instrument of public relations, perhaps because the story to be told is not a very cheerful one. More attention needs to be paid to the ideological uses of science—how light is used to cast confusing shadows.

The Social Construction of Ignorance

Ignorance is surely one of the most prominent features of knowledge about cancer in the late twentieth century. Some of that ignorance is not just a natural consequence of the ever shifting boundary between the known and the unknown but a political consequence of decisions concerning how to approach (or neglect) what could and should be done to eliminate the disease. Ignorance is politically constructed by outright censorship (admittedly rare), by failures to fund, by the absence or

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impotence of interested parties, and by efforts to "jam the scientific airwaves with noise." Science, public policy, and public opinion are all affected.

I do not want to leave the impression that there are not inherent features of the cancer problem that make it difficult to obtain solid knowledge. Unambiguous knowledge of genetic susceptibilities may have to wait for new techniques of DNA analysis, and improvements in therapy may well have to await dissection of the protein products of cancer genes. Epidemiologists face methodological obstacles that often reduce to such practical questions as: how large can I afford to make my study? Many nickel-and-dime carcinogens conferring, say, a 5 percent or 10 percent increased likelihood of disease are epidemiologically invisible, because the number of people one would have to study to obtain statistically significant results would be too large to be feasible. Animal studies and bacterial bioassays are invoked to solve this problem though these, too, are not without flaws.

My concern is that inadequate attention has been given to how one should look and act to discover causes and organize prevention. The concept of causation is part of the problem: much of the politics of cancer research lies in how far down in the chain of causation one is willing and able to look. Does one stop (or start) with genetics, or immunology, or epidemiology? When is a nation's health or environmental policy (or the absence thereof) the cause of cancer? Can cancer be caused by elections, or recessions, or ad-induced habits and fashions? Was Ronald Reagan a carcinogen? The question of where the "real cause" lies is politicized, with the "moralistic left" favoring attention to ultimate (or social) causes, and the "stonewalling right" favoring attention to more proximate causes or mechanisms. The emphasis on immediate mechanisms is attractive for those who believe that the large is to be explained by the small but never vice versa: the search for underlying causes exclusively in terms of biological mechanisms—flaws in the somatic genome, the molecular biochemistry of initiators and promoters, the activity of oncogenes and the like—effaces the diversity of social causes that "ultimately" produce the real-world variety of cancers in the first place.

A related kind of short-sightedness can be found in the effort to rest analysis after classifying a given percentage of cancers as due to "life-style factors." Thirty percent of all cancer, for example, is said to be due to smoking, but what is smoking due to? The poor smoke more than the rich, and high-school dropouts are much more likely to smoke than high school seniors. Why not say that poverty or faulty education is the primary cause of lung cancer? Why not say that cancer is caused by cigarette advertising, tobacco subsidizing, fear of fat, or youthful illusions of immortality?

Cancers are misfits in the world that epidemiologists want to attribute neatly to life-style, occupation, genetics, and infection. The search for percentages to be accorded each of these "factors" belies the extent to which occupation is shaped by culture, culture by skills and technologies, technologies by life-styles, life-styles by infectious possibilities, infectious agents by economic structures, and so forth and so on. Dietary cancers are usually classed as "life-style cancers," but how much can one blame the changes in eating habits that have followed the triumph of transport-based petrochemical agribusiness? Fat consumption, linked to colon cancer, usually registers as "diet" (= life-style)—but what does one make of the fact that people in low-earning jobs are more likely to eat fatty, high-salt, carcinogenic foods? The Bilharzia bladder cancers of the Nile Valley and Brazil usually figure in the "infection" columns of causal tables, but what does one do with the fact that the two hundred million people exposed to the parasite suffer mainly because they bathe and wash in sewage-contaminated water?

How, in other words, in a discourse dominated by concepts of genetics, germs, life-style, and occupation, does one come to grips with cancers caused by chronic poverty, medical neglect, environmental injustice, media-induced fashions, or industrial malfea-

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sance? If poverty is what distinguishes African-American cancer rates from European-American rates, why does the National Cancer Institute classify by race rather than by income? If physical exercise is one way to prevent breast cancer, why not pin at least some of the deaths on the failure to provide support for female athletics? Looking to the future: if the U.S. Army's $210 million strategic breast initiative somehow comes up with a miraculous cure or even moderately successful treatment, how should one regard the historical neglect of the malady that, for most of human history, has been one of the most deadly forms of cancer?

I don't intend all of this to be depressing, though I must confess that I do appreciate what Wilhelm Hueper meant when he characterized his method as "one piece of dirt leading to another." The story of cancer is not a very upbeat one, and the stables of the research establishment are not exactly clean. We need to focus on the seamy sides of science and not just its polished carapace. We are rightfully suspicious of fairy tales that recite the triumph of medical reason over popular superstition, but I don't take this as grounds for pessimism. There are good reasons to believe that critically informed public health measures could greatly lessen our cancer load, and this is reason, I believe, for optimistic activism.

Optimistic activism, though, requires a solid understanding of the politics of science: how priorities and practices are shaped by power formations, ideological gaps, interests and disinterests, government and industrial support (or lack thereof), disciplinary dogmas, and professional or institutional parochialisms. Recent debates over what causes cancer bring these concerns into focus, because the terrain is among the most highly contested in all of modern science. My hope is that by examining how and why such questions have become the objects of controversy, we may learn more about how politics shapes science—and perhaps even more about what really causes cancer and what to do about it. □

Notes

[1] Old age is of course a major cause of cancer, which is why death rates are generally presented as "age-adjusted" figures. Florida, for example, has a much higher annual cancer death rate than Alaska (250/100,000 vs. 80/100,000) due to the fact that Floridians are, on average, significantly older than Alaskans. Adjusting for age, one finds that Floridians actually have a slightly lower cancer mortality rate than Alaskans (163/100,000 compared to 184/100,000). See the American Cancer Society's *Cancer Facts & Figures—1992* (New York, 1992), p. 7.

[2] Early childbirth is known to lessen one's risk of breast cancer, and late or no childbirth at all seems to heighten the risk. (Nuns have long been known to have very high rates.) Hormonal fluctuations are commonly invoked to explain the disease, but surely there is something wrong with the explanation offered by Malcolm Pike, that the disease is due to women's "incessant ovulation." Similarly dissatisfying are reassurances that Long Island's high breast cancer rate can be explained by the high proportion of Jews living on the island: Jewish women may have high breast cancer rates, but why, the question then becomes, is that the case?

[3] See my "The Oberrothenbach Catastrophe," *Science*, 260 (1993): 1676–1677.

[4] The American Hospital Association, for example, based on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago, has a staff of 884 and an annual budget of about $79,000,000. Washington, D.C. headquarters some 1,700 trade associations, making trade association business, after tourism, the second-ranking private industry in the nation's capital. See Victor R. Hirsch, "Industry Performance and Public Opinion," in *The Cosmetic Industry: Scientific and Regulatory Foundations*, ed. Norman F. Estrin (New York, 1993), p. 275.

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Ruth Rosen

WHO GETS POLLUTED?

The Movement for Environmental Justice

"All communities are not created equal"
—Robert Bullard, Sociologist, U.C. Riverside

During the last decade, a grass-roots, minority-led movement against environmental racism (more recently described as the movement for environmental justice) has been spreading across urban America. Led largely by local women of color, the movement for environmental justice has received scant national attention. Yet these activists, by weaving together ideas and tactics of the civil rights and environmental movements, are creating one of the most potentially radical movements in recent American history.

What is environmental injustice? Let me begin with a true story, an incident that escaped most of the country's attention.

On July 26, 1993, while the rest of the nation watched the rising waters of the Mississippi drown people's homes and dreams, a ruptured railroad car at General Chemical's plant in North Richmond, California, spewed a fifteen-mile long toxic plume of sulfuric acid through surrounding residential communities. People wheezed and coughed, their eyes and lungs scorched by the toxic cloud. Three hours passed before the explosion could be capped. Over the next few days, more than twenty thousand residents sought medical treatment from nearby hospitals.

Disaster and trauma are nothing new to the residents of North Richmond, California, one of the poorest and most devastated African-American neighborhoods in the United States. It is a community whose history stretches back to slavery. Many residents are descendants of former southern sharecroppers, lured to Richmond during World War II by the higher paid skilled jobs created by the defense industry. On recent weekends, drive-by shootings have routinely injured as many as twenty people. The community has the highest rate of HIV-infected African-American drug users in the state. It is a community injured every day by the effects of poverty. "Unemployment, in fact, is the greatest public health problem," says Dr. Wendel Brunner, county director of public health. People hold their families and lives together with faith and a prayer.

After the accident, community and environmental activists asked questions that never seemed to get answered. Why did the General Chemical plant's accident prevention plan—required by law but barred from public scrutiny—fail to identify such a possible incident? Its "worst case" scenario predicted that a toxic plume would not extend further than its property line—a preposterous assumption. Why hadn't General Chemical installed safety technology so that, if an accident occurred, toxic emissions would be vented into alternative containment systems, rather than into the atmosphere? And why, asked residents, had neither industry nor county government established a siren warning system?

Several weeks later, the community of North Richmond gathered to hear a lame apology from a General Chemical representative, and to

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testify about the trauma they suffered. Much of the local media trivialized their complaints, accusing residents of seeking to establish fake liability claims, as though they hadn't been injured or traumatized. If the wind had driven the plume south into Berkeley's white middle-class gourmet ghetto, where activists sit in cafes sipping cafe latte discussing environmental racism, would the media have minimized the terror of a toxic cloud gassing an entire community?

As residents testified before an open microphone in a cavernous church, I heard little grandstanding, just the voices of people who felt hurt and frightened. Still hoarse and coughing, mothers described the terror they felt as they watched their families and homes gassed. They asked public health officials when their children's asthma would improve. After speaking, one woman sat down beside me, still gasping for breath. "I'm afraid to go home," she said crying softly. "When I look outside the window, how will I know if it's another toxic cloud or just summer fog?"

It could have been worse; North Richmond is a disaster waiting to happen. Fifteen serious industrial accidents at Contra Costa county's chemical plants and refineries in the past five years have endangered this area. At least thirty-eight industrial sites store as much as ninety-four million pounds of forty-five different chemicals, including some of the most dangerous—ammonia, chlorine, hydrogen fluoride and nitric acid. About 500,000 pounds of ammonia is stored at Chevron's fertilizer plant in Richmond, for example, just two miles from schools and homes. Had a toxic cloud of ammonia erupted, it would have left hundreds, if not thousands, of dead bodies on the ground.

As the journalists who briefly parachuted into North Richmond all reported, the residents were lucky this time.

North Richmond, California is only one of dozens of low-income communities that feel victimized by industrial pollution and have organized a grass-roots movement to fight for what they call environmental justice.

It's no accident that the nation's most toxic sites are surrounded by black and Latino communities. Most minority communities in the United States are poor, and low income people can't vote with their feet and move wherever they choose. Nor do the poor have the political clout to challenge the local zoning boards that protect wealthy communities.

Environmental injustice, then, refers to the fact that poor communities are disproportionately harmed by industrial toxic pollution and that corporations and government—intentionally or unintentionally—build their worst toxic sites and store their most hazardous chemicals in and around these low-income neighborhoods. It also refers to the well-documented fact that local governments have excluded minority communities from environmental planning and that toxic sites have destroyed many traditional minority communities.

Some companies, like North Richmond's Chevron, defensively point out that they built their plants long before the growth of a residential community. True enough. But Chevron's plants are the exception, not the rule. Some local government agencies argue that it is zoning, not racism, that has dumped the worst toxic substances into minority communities. Yes, but who sits on—or influences—the local city councils and county boards that carve out industrial zones? Housing developers and their friends, not the residents whose homes are just across the street from refineries and landfills.

Awareness of environmental discrimination has grown in fits and starts. Some minority activists trace their movement to 1982, when North Carolina decided to build a PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) disposal site in Warren County. For unexplained reasons, government officials allowed waste to be stored only fifteen feet above the water table, instead of the usual fifty feet required for PCBs. Outraged by what they viewed as racial discrimination, sixteen thousand residents, mostly African Americans and Native Americans, organized a series of marches and protests that resulted in over five hundred arrests. Although they lost the battle, the

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Warren County residents may have begun the battle against environmental racism.

The tragedy of Bhopal, India, on December 3, 1984 intensified American minorities' awareness of environmental dangers. When a toxic gas known as MIC leaked from a Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, the poisonous cloud killed close to four thousand people and permanently disabled another fifty thousand residents.

The magnitude of the chemical nightmare of Bhopal captured international attention and cast the media's spotlight on the predominantly African-American community of Institute, West Virginia, the site of the only Union Carbide plant in the United States that manufactured MIC. West Virginia's Kanawha Valley—dubbed by residents "the chemical capital of the world"—would never be the same.

Soon after the Bhopal tragedy, conflict broke out between those Union Carbide workers who feared for their their jobs and those who feared for their lives. A documentary film titled *Chemical Valley* (1991) recounts how Union Carbide blackmailed the community with loss of jobs and how both the company *and* the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stonewalled efforts to investigate the community's health complaints. The film also traces the community's growing political sophistication, including its awareness of its collusion in the creation of an endangered valley. In one interview, an African-American male worker sadly concedes, "I sold my soul to Union Carbide."

When community residents demanded an explanation for the chemical odors that saturated the valley's air, company inspectors somehow couldn't detect the same odors. Even more frustrating was the fact that the EPA kept revising its risk assessment methods until no health hazard could be determined. Angry but determined, one African-American woman turned organizer tells the filmmaker, "I often wonder, if it had been a white neighborhood, would they have done the same thing?" Then, without skipping a beat, she quickly adds that Union Carbide and the government probably would have treated poor—but not affluent—whites with the same indifference.

She is right. Environmental pollution is not merely a problem that affects people of color; it disproportionately threatens the poor in general. Ask the poor white citizens in Yellow Creek, Kentucky, who formed Concerned Citizens to stop a tannery from dumping toxic wastes into the creek that flowed through their community. After documenting a series of health problems and unraveling ties between local government and industry, a slate of concerned citizens successfully took over the city council.

Still, people of color are likely to be endangered because their neighborhoods are not only poor but also relatively politically powerless. To outsiders, the siting of toxic waste facilities or refineries in minority communities may seem like a coincidence, or the consequences of the poor's political marginality. To people who live in these communities, however, the very decisions that dump toxics in and around their homes seem, at best, like de facto racism. The citizens of North Richmond, for example, know that it is their poverty and political vulnerability that allow their neighborhood to be polluted. But they also know that authorities would address any middle-class white community's complaints more seriously. They feel dispensable—and discriminated against—as African Americans, not only as poor people.

Over the last decade, a series of studies and reports have amply documented the fact that impoverished racial groups--Native Americans, Mexican migrant workers, and African-American and Hispanic inner city residents—have endured the greatest industrial pollution. In 1986, for example, the Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland, California issued a report called "Toxics and Minority Communities." Among its most important findings were that two million tons of radioactive uranium tailings had been dumped on Native American lands and that cancers of the reproductive organs among Navajo teenagers had climbed to seventeen times the national average.

In April 1987, the United Church of Christ

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Commission for Racial Justice released a widely quoted study that documented environmental racism throughout the United States. Spearheaded by Ben Chavis, now the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the study discovered that three of five African Americans live in communities endangered by abandoned toxic waste sites and commercial hazardous waste landfills. The report also revealed that the nation's largest hazardous waste landfill, which receives toxics from forty-five states, is situated in Emelle, Alabama, whose population is 78.9 percent African American. The study further demonstrated that the greatest concentration of hazardous-waste sites in the United States is in the predominately black and Latino South Side of Chicago. In some cases, minority communities agreed to accept such facilities in return for jobs and contracts that never appeared.

During the last decade, scholars, journalists, and activists have been busy proving—and tracking the impact of—environmental injustice. In 1983, Robert Bullard, a sociologist at the University of California, Riverside and author of *Dumping in Dixie*, demonstrated that, from the late 1920s to the late 1970s, Houston placed all of its city-owned landfills and six of its eight incinerators in largely African-American neighborhoods. Investigative journalists have publicized the fact that the dirtiest ZIP code in California, a one square mile section of Los Angeles County, is filled with waste dumps, smokestacks and waste-water pipes from polluting industries. Environmental activists charge that it's no accident that the population in this ZIP code, where eighteen companies discharge five times as much as pollution as they emit in the next worst ZIP code, is 59 percent African American and 38 percent Hispanic.

A more recent study published by the *National Law Journal* in 1992 concluded that government agencies treat polluters based in minority areas less severely than those in largely white communities and that toxic cleanup programs under the federal Superfund law take longer and are less thorough in minority neighborhoods.

A series of "smoking gun" leaks to the public have helped make charges of environmental injustice credible. In 1984, Cerell Associates, a private consulting firm hired by the California Waste Management Board, issued a report titled "Political Difficulties Facing Waste-to-Energy Conversion Plant Siting." The report concluded that all socioeconomic groups resent and resist the siting of hazardous wastes in their neighborhoods (NIMBYism or Not In My Backyard Syndrome) but that lower income groups have fewer resources to fight government decisions. Hardly a startling conclusion, but when leaked to the public, the study helped galvanize the growing environmental justice movement in California.

Activists had longed suspected—and in some cases documented—that the industrialized world intentionally dumped toxic wastes in third world countries. When an internal memo written by a chief economist from the World Bank was leaked to the public in 1991, it touched off a global scandal. The candor of the memo—"Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging MORE migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [Less Developed Countries]?"—revealed the kind of cavalier cynicism the World Bank expresses toward third world countries. The memo offered further ammunition to activists because the author cited three reasons for dumping toxics in Third World nations: the fact that their citizens already had a lower life expectancy; that such countries were relatively still "under-polluted;" and that impairing the health of people with the lowest wages made the "greatest economic sense."

The environmental movement used to conjure up an image of white middle-class people concerned with conserving a pristine wilderness, backpackers seeking to protect a contemplative sanctuary, and conservationists who sought to protect the forests, rivers, and species of the Earth.

No more. From farm-worker communities to Native American reservations, from urban landfills to waste dumps, minority activists are expanding environmentalism to include the

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protection of urban and rural communities endangered by industrial toxic substances. Until recently, many minority communities had been willing to choose between jobs and environmental pollution. Poor people worry more about starving to death from unemployment than about the health risks they may face from industrial pollution. Robert Bullard, whose most recent book *Confronting Environmental Racism* provides an excellent overview of the movement for environmental justice, explains, "These [communities] are ideal because of their powerlessness and their lack of education and vulnerability. It's the path of least resistance whether it's a municipal landfill, an incinerator, a toxic-waste dump or a chemical plant. It's exploiting the fears of communities that have a high unemployment rate. Any job is better than no job."

In the last decade, however, a growing number of minority communities have refused to choose between jobs and the environmental health of their families and communities. In a study of nine of these community resistance movements, Bullard found that eight of them began as environmental groups and that six were led by women who were grass-roots activists. Their tactics focused on local targets: they demonstrated and marched, held hearings and public workshops, initiated fact-finding research, and filed suits against local and state governments. Not content to fight against health hazards, most of the groups embraced a multi-issue agenda, organized around the principles of social justice and economic equity.

North Richmond, California, for example, has developed an intricate infrastructure of community organizations that is challenging industry's ability to threaten their community. In the last decade, minority-led-groups like the North Richmond West County Toxics Coalition have redefined environmentalism to emphasize the protection of urban residents from toxic pollution. Both Citizens for a Better Environment and the Sierra Club have offered their assistance to these groups.

Other communities, too, have begun to challenge corporate and government environmental discrimination. In 1985, Concerned Citizens of South Central (Los Angeles), one of the nation's first African-American environmental groups, defeated an effort by a manufacturer to build one of the country's fourteen toxic waste incinerators in their neighborhood. When another manufacturer tried to construct it a few miles away in a large Latino community, Concerned Citizens joined with the largely Latino Concerned Mothers of East L.A., sued the government and won. In the Los Angeles struggle, the wilderness-focused group Earth First! joined with community organizations.

Although largely ignored by the national media, the leaders of this grass-roots movement have quietly challenged the corporate right to endanger the health of poor people. *Vogue* magazine recently featured a rare profile of one of these unsung heroines.

Patsy Ruth Oliver was a former resident of Carver Terrace, a polluted black suburb in Texarkana. African American families began to notice dark patches of "gunk" seeping through their withered lawns, around puddles and into the cracked center of the street. An unusual cluster of medical problems further terrified the residents of this community.

The truth did not emerge until 1979, one year after residents discovered leaking barrels of dioxin beneath Love Canal, New York. Congress ordered the country's biggest chemical firms to identify their hazardous waste sites, and the Pittsburgh-based Koppers Company placed Carver Terrace high on its list. For half a century, it turned out, Koppers' old treatment plant had used creosote (a known carcinogen) to coat railroad ties. When Koppers Company closed the plant in 1961, it bulldozed over most of the operation, including the creosote tanks. African-American families who had scrimped and saved to own their own homes happily bought up the plots in this new suburb.

In 1984, Texas officials asked the federal EPA to place Carver Terrace on the Superfund list, the $1.3 billion trust that congress established in 1980 to clean up toxic waste dumps. The EPA brought in a small army of scientists, outfitted in full protective gear, who declared the soil contaminated, but then, in an arcane and baffling twist, concluded that the

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area posed no immediate danger to residents' health. The EPA never even bothered to interview the residents.

Outraged, Oliver and her neighbors formed the Carver Terrace Community Action group, and with the assistance of local environmentalists, residents soon discovered that the EPA had failed to inform them of two other studies that showed that Carver Terrace did indeed pose immediate risks to the community's health. The community group decided that its members—like the residents of Love Canal—wanted the government to buy them out. Oliver knew that it was racism, not the soil, that distinguished Carver Terrace from Love Canal. "If there's one thing I know," she said, "it's racism; I have a master's degree in Jim Crow."

Eventually, over the objections of the EPA, Patsy Ruth Oliver and her neighbors forced the government to buy them out. The neighbors dispersed. In the process, a budding suburban African American community was saved, but also destroyed. Robert Bullard, who has studied the local leadership of these campaigns, explains that "Patsy typifies what's happening in the environmental justice movement in communities of color. It's mostly women who get involved to protect family, home, and community. These are not traditional environmentalists. These are people talking about survival."

Oliver, who joined the board of Friends of the Earth, then went on to publicize the environmental hazards faced by poor communities in the Southwest. On December 17, 1993, the day demolition of homes began in Carver Terrace, Patsy Ruth Oliver died of a heart attack.

"Crack babies are the spotted owl of East Oakland. They're an indicator species of the health of the community."
—Carl Anthony, Director of Urban Habitat

The movement for environmental justice, led by grassroots activists like Patsy Ruth Oliver, is offering a serious challenge to government and corporate environmental policies. But the obstacles are daunting.

The national media, for example, haven't grasped that all these local organizations constitute a new movement—despite the large number of citizens who have marched, demonstrated and been arrested. True, local media arrive in herds when a toxic explosion threatens lives. Journalists dutifully interview leaders for the evening news, but they leave as soon as they count the bodies and collect their sound bites. What they fail to report is that the community's demonstrations, marches and meetings are part of a movement that transcends traditional civil rights or environmental concerns.

In part, one can blame the media's racist and sexist attitudes for this truculent indifference. Community leaders, after all, are often local women who speak on behalf of minority populations. Without a high-profile national reputation that can capture the media's attention, they are easily ignored. Nor do these women actively seek media attention. They want results, not public glory. As mothers and grandmothers of the community—often veterans of the civil rights movement—they organize to protect the health of their families and communities. What motivates these women is an outrage born of the desperate desire to hold together already fragile families and communities.

The federal government offers yet more obstacles. Rather than protecting these communities, the Environmental Protection Agency has been slow to acknowledge the existence of environmental injustice or to investigate minority communities' health hazards. In its 1990 report, "Environmental Equity: Reducing Risks for All Communities," the EPA finally agreed that minority communities have borne more than their share of environmentally undesirable hazards. The EPA's Office of Environmental Equity, which opened just last year, now plans to initiate several demonstration projects at cleanup sites in poor communities. The agency also promised to launch a public awareness campaign targeted at minority groups. Minority activists, however, aren't holding their breath; they have observed the

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EPA's grudging interest in the Kanawha Valley and other community battles against industrial pollution.

Another serious problem is the way the EPA evaluates health hazards. Community activists believe that higher rates of asthma, cancer, and respiratory diseases in poor neighborhoods may be linked to air, water and soil pollution from industries. But the EPA investigates specific causation, rather than evaluating the aggregate risks that assault a community. Employing a "scientific" method of risk assessment—which selects from dozens of variables—EPA environmental epidemiologists invariably fail to demonstrate a link between a particular pollutant and a specific disease. "Risk assessment," says Dr. Wendel Brunner, public health director of the county in which North Richmond's refineries are located, "is the only thing that makes economics look like a science."

Arguing against risk-assessment methods, Robert Bullard proposes that the burden of proof should shift from communities, which now have to prove the existence of health hazards, to industry, which should have to prove that their operations do no harm. Bullard also proposes a Fair Environmental Protection Act to redress the intended and unintended effects of public and industrial policies. Based on the precedents of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, such federal and state legislation would prohibit environmental discrimination based on race and class.

One sign of the movement's success came in February 1993, when the Clinton administration issued an Executive Order requiring federal agencies to "make environmental justice a part of all they do." Under the order, every agency would have to consider the impact of its policies on minority communities. In addition, the initiative sets in motion an unprecedented data-gathering effort across the federal government to document the impact of pollution on low-income and minority communities. Some movement activists hailed the executive order as a great success; others thought the order evaded the need for an environmental justice impact statement to accompany every agency's policy.

The movement for environmental justice has also had more success in forging a multiracial coalition among community groups than in joining forces with established labor organizations or national environmental groups. In April 1990, for example, the SouthWest Organizing Project drew together thirty organizations from the Southwest, mostly minority representatives involved in environmental and economic justice issues.

Job blackmail, which has hit most American workers, makes efforts to organize against industrial pollution particularly difficult. In response to the demand for healthy jobs as well as a clean environment, many American companies have chosen to relocate. Labor organizers and environmental activists have been seeking ways to unite their movement on the issue of removing toxics from the workplace. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International, for example, proposed a new federal "superfund" for workers displaced by the removal of toxics from the workplace. Such workers would receive displacement benefits while training to reenter the work force with new skills. But such joint efforts are few and far between, particularly in minority communities.

Although mainstream environmental organizations have occasionally provided minority organizations with invaluable expert testimony, research, technical assistance and legal advice, no real coalition between the established national groups—whose membership is largely white and middle class—and minority community organizations has so far developed.

In a very real sense, these activists come from different worlds and are concerned about different worlds. At best, the large, mainstream environmental groups focus on the health of the planet—the wildernesses, forests and oceans that cannot protect themselves. In contrast, the movement for environmental justice, led by the poor, is not concerned with overabundance, but with the environmental hazards and social and economic inequalities that ravage their communities.

Some mainstream environmentalists charge that minority grass-roots organizations aren't sufficiently concerned with the environment, that they seek only a fairer distribution of environmental dangers—"environmental equity." And when poor communities accept monetary repa-

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rations from polluting industries, mainstream environmental activists sometimes charge them with being "bought off" by industry.

Such allegations, however, miss the radical potential of grass-roots environmental activism. Poor communities, already ravaged by drugs, violence, and unemployment, have only the slimmest resources to protect their own health from industrial waste. But their insistence upon decent jobs as well as a clean environment is a legitimate *and* radical demand that challenges the distribution of wealth and racial discrimination in America. Furthermore, by promoting their own NIMBYism, minority communities offer a profound challenge to past corporate and governmental environmental practices. For if industrial America cannot dump its waste in minority communities, or if these communities exact too high a price, Americans must decide what kinds of toxics they will tolerate anywhere.

As one community activist recently said about a proposed waste incinerator: "I don't want these things in my back yard, and I don't want them in any back yard." Peter L. Reich, a legal expert on environmental race discrimination, argues—perhaps a bit optimistically—that "When the pollution costs of industrial development can no longer be shifted to the powerless, greening the ghetto will be the first step in greening our entire society."

Let's hope he's right.

POSTSCRIPT: The residents of North Richmond have patiently waited. State and local officials, after all, appeared to listen attentively to their complaints.

Four months after the toxic emission, California state health environmental epidemiologists called a community meeting at which they announced that they had changed their minds and could not design a study to measure the health impact of the toxic release.

Five months after the incident, the county office of emergency services still had not designed a long-promised evacuation plan for North Richmond residents.

Six months later, industry still had not installed an early warning siren system.

Bureaucratic bumbling, environmental racism, or environmental injustice? Which words most accurately describe the casual indifference authorities have demonstrated? The community of North Richmond will, no doubt, hand down its own verdict.

Meanwhile, their organized movement has won one major victory: As reparations, General Chemical has agreed to build and support a medical clinic in the community. A small but important triumph in the long struggle for environmental justice. □

To Our Contributors:

A few suggestions:

(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your manuscript. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article. We will not consider manuscripts submitted simultaneously to several publications.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility. No dot matrix submissions, *please*. Use WordPerfect 5.1 if possible. Please use inclusive language so that we don't have to make adjustments during editing.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

THE EDITORS □

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David Kramer

THE GRAYING OF THE GERMAN GREENS

Environmental Politics and the Crisis of Consensus

Pity the fate of the graying Greens. Germany is full of this sad—and perhaps politically endangered—species. The "anti-party" that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a synonym for youthful vigor has become just another political party—nearly as boring and encrusted as the old-line parties. A product of post-World War II Germany's "baby-boomers," the Greens never got the knack of capturing the support of the "baby-bust" cohorts born after 1967.

Partly, the Greens have been the victims of their own success. When everybody is more or less "green," maintaining the distinctiveness of the Green party is no easy trick. But, beyond this "crisis of consensus," the German Greens face other troubles. Like the other political parties in West Germany, they were caught napping by the collapse of communism and abruptness of reunification. But whereas the other parties could reactivate dormant nationalistic or patriotic elements of their traditions as the drama of re-unification unfolded, the Greens were stuck with their own carefully cultivated rootlessness and antinationalism. In fact, the Greens had always vehemently denied obvious historical parallels of their antimodernism to classic German romanticism and even some Nazi ideology.

Like the old-line political parties, the Greens are struggling with the difficulties of integrating personalities from the former East Germany into their party and program. But, unlike the old-line parties, the Greens failed to get enough votes in the federal election of 1990 to earn representation in the Bundestag. The eastern contingent of the new Green Party—Alliance 90, a motley gaggle of East German civil rights activists and environmentalists—has Bundestag representation thanks to special rules adopted for the election of 1990. Thus, the Greens have a relatively stronger contingent of East Germans than the old-line parties, in which East Germans mostly play decorative or honorific roles.

In the shadow thrown by the Berlin Wall and NATO's security shield, self-righteous pacifism was an article of faith in West German Green political discourse. Now the Greens are facing the same challenge faced by all other German political parties—that of defining the German role as a military force in a dangerous and confusing post-cold war world. A few prominent (former) West German Greens, such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit, have called for a reassessment of dogmatic pacifism. After a spirited public debate, a special Green party conference in October 1993 voted to confirm the party's traditional rhetorical pacifism, but it is unlikely that the last word has been spoken in this matter.

Throughout the 1980s the West German Greens flourished in the public disenchantment with established political culture. Many voters were convinced that a caste of political professionals had positioned itself in an all-party alliance at the public trough. To underline their own distinctiveness, the Greens adopted

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regulations requiring rotation of party members in offices. They engaged in fitful revolts against various "cults of personality" and required Green officials to "donate" a considerable portion of their salaries to approved charities. But from the beginning, the party was also subject to tensions between such populist urges and, well, occupying its own comfortable position at the public trough.

West German democracy has many strengths—and some notorious weaknesses. One of the most fateful of the latter is that the political class has largely managed to emancipate itself from popular control by shameless raiding of the public purse. The spoils of these raids are divvied up among the parties according to a formula roughly reflecting their electoral strength. The guises that the parties use to extort money from the public treasury are legion. They include reimbursement of election "costs," public political "education," political polling and research, political "foundations," and so on. Of course, only political "parties" can join in this fun. The 5 percent rule for parliamentary representation generally prevented smaller political formations from fully participating in the larceny.

The West German Greens were the first political formation in many years to break through the 5 percent barrier. But despite all of their "anti-party" noises, the temptations of the system proved too enticing. The Greens have proved to be the most adept of all German parties in securing government revenues for themselves. In 1992, state transfers to the Green party amounted to DM 47.1 million, compared to DM 13 million in membership contributions and DM 6.8 million from other grants and contributions. None of the old-line parties, so bitterly criticized by the Greens for alleged financial profligacy, even remotely approaches this degree of dependence (over 70 percent of revenues!) on direct state subsidies.

Moreover, the Greens have a cadre of functionaries who are products of this system, many of whom have never had another—real—job to which they could return. Thus, at a time when the general public is increasingly cynical about the self-serving machinations of the political class, the Greens often appear as merely one more variation on a distasteful theme. In areas of Germany governed by a Red-Green (SPD-Green) coalition, scandals of patronage and featherbedding involving Green functionaries are increasingly common.

The temptations of power are only one side of the equation for Greens in—or seeking—office. The other side is the realization that there is no easy way back to the Garden of Eden. It is one thing to rail against "industrial society" from the sidelines, but it is another to seek positions in which one has no choice but to adopt and enforce policies with immediate repercussions on sensitive economic and social interests. Lord Acton was only partially correct: power not only corrupts, it also deflates.

Thus the financial chief of Frankfurt am Main, the most preposterously indebted of all large German cities, is Tom Koenigs, the once-prodigal son of a prominent banker. A veteran Green, Koenigs's original claim to public notice was the fact that he once donated a sizable sum to the Vietcong. But in his current role as chief public financial officer of Germany's banking center, this ascetic former rebel has done approximately what one would expect of a conventional banker: he ruthlessly cut the bloated budget. The fact that Koenigs has engaged an adviser from Germany's largest financial institution, the Deutsche Bank, may increase his credibility in certain quarters. But in others it highlights a nagging question: do we really need the Greens to get this result?

At present, the most significant point of friction between ecological intention and economic and social reality is a program known as the "Dual System, Green Point." This is the keystone of Germany's incredibly ambitious official goal of recycling—well, nearly everything. The Greens rightly point out that this cumbersome, expensive program is not really their baby. Nevertheless, this and other ambitious schemes of trash management have turned the Germans into a nation of garbage sorters. Garbage sorting, it turns out, is a rarefied art, requiring thousands of spontaneous decisions by people who are at best highly motivated, but

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often poorly informed: do packages that are hard to identify as plastic or paper belong with the plastic or the paper? What about glass? Some glass is easily recognizable as green, or brown, or clear. But what about glass that is merely murky? There are already cases in which garbage collectors have refused to empty bins of green glass because they contained suspicious traces of murky glass. And how "clean" does the garbage have to be? The idea of "cleaning" garbage may require a revolution in human behavior that will make the aspirations of Marxism-Leninism look downright homey in retrospect.

But the vagaries of garbage sorting are only the tip of a trashy iceberg. What happens to the more-or-less pedantically sorted garbage? According to the newsweekly *Focus*, it becomes the object of "absurd scandals." Not only is some of the carefully sorted garbage shunted off to be unceremoniously dumped in less prosperous countries; it is also far from clear that the entire exercise actually benefits the environment. In some cases, in fact, there appears to be evidence of net environmental damage. The influential weekly *Der Spiegel* has raised the question of whether the "Dual System" has not already proved to be a seven-billion-mark (4.2 billion dollar) misinvestment.

The Green movement in Germany was always more than just an ecological protest movement. From the outset it had strong elements of the type of apocalyptic antimodernism that has been an ongoing contrapuntal subtheme to Germany's turbulent process of modernization. Green politicians were expected not only to talk like Greens, but to look and act like Greens as well. Thus, in the early days of Green ascendancy in the German Bundestag, it was considered a provocation on the part of Otto Schily, who has since migrated to the SPD, always to wear a tie. Properly attired Green men generally turned out in sweaters, peasant blouses, or some other suitably "non-bourgeois" getup.

Green politicians were expected to exhibit a moralizing and ideological rigor which stood in stark contrast to the flaccid pragmatism of mainstream German politics. Nobody was better at this than Petra Kelly and her unlikely beau, renegade Bundeswehr General Gert Bastian. The shocking deaths of Kelly and Bastian in October 1992—and the ensuing public controversy—will continue to haunt the Greens in upcoming political struggles.

Kelly and Bastian were clearly the First Couple of the Green movement. So much about them seemed so right from the Green point of view. They were not linked by anything so conventional as marriage, for one thing; for another, their roles in the partnership seemed suitably jumbled, with Kelly the jet-setting luminary, and Bastian increasingly playing the part of homemaker and secretary. But the fairy tale came to an abrupt end with the discovery of their lifeless bodies in their Bonn house, in an apparent murder-suicide. Compounding the blow to Green supporters are speculations that Bastian may have feared revelations of a compromising relationship to the East German secret police (Stasi).

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the Greens today is that of finding a niche in a political climate that fully accepts the major tenets of contemporary environmentalism. In present-day Germany there is no equivalent of Rush Limbaugh railing daily to a mass audience against "environmental wackos." Books critical of organized environmentalism, like those by Dixy Lee Ray or Ronald Bailey, attract little attention and have no parallel here. On the contrary: the German translation of Al Gore's ponderous *Earth in the Balance* has been on the best-seller lists for weeks. Indeed, no environmental scenario seems too dire, no prediction of impending doom too extreme to elicit public skepticism.

There are many reasons for this peculiar state of public opinion, some deeply rooted in German history. For centuries, Germany has been a densely populated country that has valued careful stewardship of property and resources. The "slash-and-burn" mentality underlying American expansion into a vast continent has never been a viable option here. The prissy orderliness of German towns and villages (at least those spared Soviet-style

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communism) reflects centuries of careful husbandry. In addition, a mystical veneration of German soil, of the foreboding forests, of the flowing streams has been a durable feature of German romanticism. This is why many a contemporary environmental pronouncement may appear at first glance to have a resemblance to certain "*Blut und Boden*" effusions of the Nazi era.

However, such traditional sources of pro-environmental sentiment have recently been reshaped by more modern elements. The proximity of West Germany to the former Soviet bloc—not to mention the firsthand experience of the East Germans—has sparked a unique sensibility to the unbelievable environmental depredations of Soviet Communism. Remember: Chernobyl was for West Germans not merely a distant confirmation of the emotional comforts of environmental high-mindedness; instead, it was an existential threat, leading to the establishment of a national ministry for the environment and reactor safety. In addition, re-unification has provided West Germans with unbuffered exposure to the environmental debacle orchestrated by communism, and the costs of dealing with such a legacy. The full withdrawal of remaining Soviet troops in Germany scheduled for 1994 threatens to confront the Germans with major challenges of trying to clean up former military sites. No other western democracy has been subjected to such stiff tuition.

Perhaps some good has come of all this. As public expectations and increasingly stringent regulations have required German industry to "clean up its act," environmental technology has come to represent not only a burden, but also a potential source of jobs and profits. In the widespread public discussion about the future of German industry, a high standard of environmental protection is generally presented as a potential advantage rather than an impediment to international competitiveness. Thus Germany seems likely to continue to play the role that it has already assumed, that of an environmental avant-gardiste. The ads in any glossy German magazine should suffice to convince skeptics that German companies are no longer involved in manufacturing widgets. Instead, without exception, they are now dedicated to promoting blue skies and green pastures. Since even McDonald's has developed a variety of slick environmentalism as a marketing tool, the Greens may have to stay on their toes to avoid being perceived as "McParty."

If the Greens manage to avoid co-optation of their raison d'étre by big business, they will have to maneuver very carefully to avoid foundering on a new sort of German "Perotism"—the politics of free-floating protest for its own sake. Recent elections in Hamburg saw the emergence of a new formation calling itself the "Instead of Party" (*Stattpartei*). Other similar groups are organizing around the country. Many German voters, weary of broken promises from political parties, seem to have embraced "un-parties" featuring no coherent program at all. After all: promises not made cannot be broken.

In any event, German politics has clearly entered a period of unpredictable change. The stability of the classical pattern of two large, nearly equal political blocs (SPD and CDU/CSU), balanced off by a much smaller Free Democratic Party (FDP), had already begun to unravel during the 1980s. There is little chance that anything so stable can be cobbled together in reunited Germany—even if the German economy begins to recover from its recent doldrums. More likely, the "Super Election Year of 1994" (with nineteen important elections at various levels of government) will reshape the political landscape. In the course of that year, the main political blocs stand to be weakened to the benefit of the smaller parties, including perhaps the FDP, maybe the odd "unparty," conceivably one or more right-wing parties, and—possibly—the Greens. Certainly the Greens no longer preside over a monopoly on environmental concerns. Notably, several of the right-wing groups also energetically wave the environmental banner. The question is whether the Greens will once again claim the high ground of public opinion on these issues. If not, their only recourse may be to repackage thesmselves as the "Grays." □

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Christian Joppke and Andrei S. Markovits

GREEN POLITICS IN THE NEW GERMANY

The Future of an Anti-Party Party

The West German Green party had an ironic relationship to the West German Federal Republic. While the self-styled "anti-party party" found its identity in all-out opposition to the established forces and institutions of the Bonn republic, it was also a distinctive creation of that regime. Above all, it mirrored the sheltered prosperity, political provincialism, and postnationalism that future historians will recognize as the signature of the Bonn republic. For its part, that state had in many ways become a Green republic.

Domestically, economic growth and social peace allowed the green topics of ecology, risk, and participation to become key public policy issues of the day. In foreign policy, the "Genscherist" advocacy of peace, dialogue, and nonaggression was likewise couched in greenish colors. But the Greens' greatest legacy has been in environmental policy. As a direct consequence of the Greens' engagement, the Federal Republic developed the strictest environmental protection laws anywhere in the world.

Thus it was fitting that, with the old Bundesrepublik, the Green party also faded away, at least at the national level. The West German Greens' noble refusal to "annex" their Green sister party in the East caused the Greens as a whole narrowly to fail the 5 percent threshold for representation in the Bundestag in the first all-German elections of December 1990. Although this surprising defeat resulted partly from strategic blunders, it also reveals more far-reaching difficulties of the Greens in coping with the events of 1989. Children of the postnational Bonn republic, the Greens failed to see the national implications of the East German revolution, as indicated in their futile commitment to a reformed socialist GDR (East Germany). The Green election slogan of 1990 indicates how oddly out of tune the party was with the dramatic reshuffling of the political agenda that was brought about by national unification: "Everyone is talking about Germany. We are talking about the weather."

Two years later, Oskar Lafontaine, the "Greenish" Social Democratic front-runner in 1990 credited with "stealing" some 600,000 voters from the Greens, maliciously remarked that "many members and supporters of the Greens are still stuck in mourning the old Federal Republic." He added that the party "is not yet adjusted to the new challenges."

Toward an Ecological Reform Party

What are these challenges? The first arises from the tension, deeply embedded in the Greens' history, between uncompromising radicalism and reform. Throughout the Greens' first ten years, this struggle pitted the party's "Realo" faction, advocates of reform and coalition building with the Social Democrats, against the "Fundi" faction, which fiercely rejected any compromises with the established powers that be.

The sudden collapse of communism hastened

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the final round in this intraparty conflict. The radical Fundis, whose dominance of the party's key positions had never been backed by comparable rank-and-file support, found their anti-capitalist rhetoric outdistanced by events. The revamped East German Communist party became the catalyst of the Fundis' eventual loss. While the Fundis opted for an all-German leftist coalition with the former Communists, the Green party's majority rejected this solution. In successive waves of party defections, the ecosocialist faction around ex-Maoists Rainer Trampert and Thomas Ebermann left the Greens in 1990, followed by the exodus of the radical ecology faction around Jutta Ditfurth one year later. Both gravitated toward the PDS, the former Communists.

The departure of the Fundis cleared the way for the Greens to establish themselves as a reform-oriented ecology party. These new Greens are open to coalition formation with the Social Democrats, or even the conservative Christian Democrats on the local level. Joschka Fischer, the head of the prevailing Realo faction, had always demanded that the Greens must become a party that "seeks to govern this country, from the local to the federal level." This seems to be the direction the party is now taking.

At the Thirteenth Party Convention in 1991, the Greens finally abandoned the debilitating principle of office rotation that had been intended to counteract careerism among activists. Reforms were introduced to streamline the party's legendarily chaotic decision-making structures. Although these changes embellish the "professional" image of the Greens, they are not without risk. The raison d'etre of the Greens has been their close connection to extraparliamentary social movements. Part of the party's charm consisted in its chaotic yet participatory mores, which made the Greens a platform of civil society unparalleled by any other party in the Federal Republic. Sensitive Realo Greens like Fischer are well aware that unchecked professionalization would turn the Greens into a party just like any other, thereby threatening their very soul. Now that the Realos have won the struggle over the profile of the Greens, balancing the seemingly irreconcilable requirements of efficiency and legitimacy will continue to preoccupy the party.

Integrating the East German Dissidents

The second challenge concerns the integration of the East German dissident movement. If there had been any doubt, the disastrous outcome of the 1990 elections brought the urgency of this need home to the Greens. The response came in early 1993, when the Western Greens formally coalesced with the Alliance 90, the electoral platform of the Eastern dissident movement.

Why had this fusion, despite its compelling programmatic and electoral logic, been so difficult to achieve? In personal appearance and political style the Eastern dissidents and the Western Greens have been remarkably similar. For both, it was the New Left's pinnacle year of 1968—student protest in the West and the Prague Spring in the East—that constituted their formative experience. Moreover, the past preoccupation of East German dissidents with peace, ecology, and third world concerns (which was exceptional in Eastern Europe) conveys the paradoxical influence of the West's "new social movements" east of the Wall. Yet the East German dissidents also carried the disillusioning experience of forty years of dictatorship, which made them ill at ease with the "anti-system" rhetoric and "radical chic" that flourished among some Western Greens. "Too leftist," "too feminist," were some of the typical East German dissident responses to the stance of their Western counterparts.

The latter in turn accused the Easterners of being "too conformist," "too moderate," "too rightist." In addition, the former dissidents now loudly deplore the implicit collaboration of the West German political elite—including the Greens—with the old East German regime. "Peace" and "security partnership" had been the key mantras in the age of detente among Eastern and Western elites. One result was Western disregard for the plight of the potentially "destabilizing" dissident movements in East Germany and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. As the former dissident (and

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current representative of Alliance 90 in the Bundestag) Gerd Poppe put it, "for the sake of the great peace we were to dispense with human rights." With very few exceptions, the Western Greens had embraced a detente mentality which allowed criticism of human rights violations in Nicaragua or Argentina, but not in East Germany or Czechoslovakia.

To be sure, the Eastern qualms with the Western peace discourse have their own hypocrisy. In a curious anomaly, in Eastern Europe the Western quest for the "great peace" was also widely shared in East German dissident circles. Tellingly, the first organized opposition movement in East Germany had viewed itself as a "peace movement," not a "human rights movement." Moreover, the Eastern distaste for the "leftist" Western Greens appears strange, if one considers that the quixotic quest for "true socialism" had energized the Eastern dissident movement as late as 1989. This movement's retroactive denunciation of Western "leftist" discourse obviously entails a certain distortion of its own ambiguous past.

Finally, the East German dissidents have prided themselves on guarding their independence. They did not want to surrender this as readily as their East German compatriots did by voting their old state out of existence. In this regard, the fusion between Alliance 90 and the Greens offers a positive contrast to West Germany's nearly *Anschluss*-like annexation of East Germany. Out of concern for East German sensibilities, the new party, founded in January 1993 in Hannover, named itself "Alliance 90-Greens." This label is no small concession to the East German Alliance, considering that the membership of the latter amounted to less than one-tenth of that of the West German party. In addition, the Alliance is entitled to keep its trademark name of "citizen movement" (*Bürgerbewegung*), which comes with a veto right in the *Länderrat*, the Greens' state-based steering committee. Three of the eleven seats in the new party's executive committee are reserved for the Alliance, and the Alliance also furnishes one of its two spokespersons. Given the moderate politics of the former dissidents, these concessions also further strengthen the Realo faction of the Greens and thus will accelerate the party's departure from the radical left.

Coping With the Nation

A third challenge arising out of 1989 concerns the problem of nationhood. Until lately in postwar Germany, the grand issues of political conflict turned mainly on allocation of resources and democratic procedure. The Greens found their political identity in addressing the negative side effects of economic growth, and in criticizing a producer-oriented, corporatist style of decision making that excluded environmental concerns, the interests of consumers, and those of women. The new grand issue is what all previous political conflicts could take for granted: the definition of membership in the nation-state.* For this new issue the Greens are uniquely unprepared. In the tradition of the left, the Greens' identity was universalist. The new issue requires the particularistic drawing of boundaries, something which has always been the prerogative of the political right.

The Greens' difficulties with the new issue of boundary drawing and national membership have become apparent in the recent debate about asylum and immigration. Reflecting the German postwar left's aversion to the principles of nationhood and the nation-state, the Greens continue to advocate a policy of open borders and unrestricted settlement that is at odds with the dramatic migration movements of postcommunist Europe. Their election platform of 1990 even rejects an American-style immigration law based on quotas of admission.

Similarly, the Greens fiercely rejected the recent restrictions on Article 16 of the Basic Law, which guaranteed automatic admission to anyone who claimed to be a political refugee—some 438,000 individual claimants in 1992 alone. The Green advocacy of a "multicultural

* We take the triple distinction of allocative, procedural, and citizenship conflicts from Herbert Kitschelt, "The 1990 German Federal Election and the National Unification," *West European Politics* 14(4), 1991, pp. 121-148.

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democracy" completely dismisses the reality of bounded, national citizenship. This same mentality is apparent in the Green proposal for a new German Constitution, which was jointly drafted with representatives of the East German dissident movement. This proposal conspicuously avoids the notion of "German" and defines "the people" (*das Volk*), from which sovereignty is to originate, as "the totality of all citizens" without any reference to "Germans."

To be sure, the ethnic definition of nationhood in Germany is a deplorable anomaly in Western Europe. Its "civic" redefinition is one of the most important political tasks today. But the complete refusal by the Greens to draw any kind of boundary avoids the task altogether. The Green disaffection with all that is national truthfully reflects their federal republican origins, where the legacy of National Socialism had thoroughly discredited a positive national identity. Although one can sympathize with this position, the question remains whether the evasion of nationhood and nation-state is politically expedient.

Despite the ongoing tendencies toward economic globalization and political supranationalization, we still live in a world of bounded citizenries, in which the political unit is the nation. The Green maxim that "in Germany the national question can never be claimed by the left" only allows the recent antiforeigner movements to claim it from the other side of the political spectrum. The Green disavowal of the conservative campaign to "normalize" history in the interest of a "healthy" national identity is commendable. But in ceding the terrain of national discourse completely to the resurgent political right, the Greens and their intellectual allies have unwittingly contributed to the current polarization of the political landscape in Germany. Surely the left must engage in the redefinition of German national identity, rather than seeking to flee it.

Geopolitics and Nonviolence

The final challenge to the Green party arises from geopolitics and international relations. One of the core pillars of Green identity is the party's strict insistence on nonviolence in interstate relations. This is ironic, because in domestic regard the Greens still refuse to recognize the state's monopoly of violence and advocate the use of "counterviolence" by social movements. But the programmatic insistence on nonviolence between states reflects the Greens' close relationship to the peace movement of the early 1980s, the broadest mass movement in the history of the Federal Republic. The party program of 1990 calls for a "world without military blocs and a society without weapons and armies," which translates into concrete demands to abolish the German army and withdraw from NATO.

However, the Gulf War and the Serbian aggression against Bosnia have left serious cracks in the Greens' pacifism. During the Gulf War, leading Greens, such as Petra Kelly, Gerd Bastian, and Joschka Fischer, attacked the "naive pacifism" of the peace movement. They chided the latter for flexing its notorious anti-American muscle—"No Blood for Oil"—while completely ignoring Iraq's threat to annihilate Israel. Moreover, leading German intellectuals with known left-wing and Green sympathies, such as Jürgen Habermas; the journalists Cora Stephan and Klaus Hartung; the political scientist Claus Leggewie; and the poet and balladier Wolf Biermann supported the Allied effort in the Gulf War. For all of them, Munich-style appeasement was a patently inadequate response to unbridled dictatorial aggression.

More in line with traditional Green sentiments was party spokesperson Christian Ströbele's remark that Iraq's attack on Israel was "the logical, almost necessary consequence of Israel's policy toward the Palestinians and the Arab states." Ströbele's controversial remark cost him his job in the Green party. Nevertheless, this episode once again confirmed the troubled relationship of the German New Left to the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and the state of Israel. In 1984, a Green parliamentary delegation had used a visit to Israel to "condemn Israel's terror" in the Occupied Territories, thus creating the delicate situation of Germans denouncing Jewish "terror."

The initial Green reflex to the U.S.-led

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attack on Iraq was to inveigh against "American imperialism." But more sensible Greens noticed that a strictly pacifist stance conflicted with the Jewish state's moral and political right to exist. Accordingly, the peace movement that had reemerged in a nationwide campaign almost overnight remained peculiarly devoid of prominent leadership. The central rally of 200,000 in Bonn in January 1991 was reminiscent of the huge peace rallies in opposition to the deployment of Euromissiles ten years earlier, but received no official endorsement from the Green party's leadership.

The war in Bosnia predictably did not spark any "peace" rally in Germany. The peace movement, so visible and vocal in its opposition to the Gulf War in 1991, had all but disappeared in 1992. Epitomizing the prevailing mood, a peace movement leader confessed that he "would rather be on a ship of fools than on an aircraft carrier." But the Serbian aggression further crystallized the split between "bellicists" and "pacifists" in the Green party. In January 1993, the Greens of Hamburg even passed a resolution calling for military intervention by United Nation troops against Serbia, with German participation. The resolution caused a storm of protest within the party, leading to its eventual withdrawal.

But the cracks in the pacifist front have been real. The need for military action to counteract massive human rights violations and genocide is not likely to be wished away by any ritualistic commitment to peace. The conflict between bellicists and pacifists has led to interesting new coalitions on both sides. On behalf of the pacifists, skeptical military leaders and peace movement supporters produce "realistic" scenarios purporting to show the futility of a clear military solution to the muddled ethnic war in Bosnia. The bellicist camp, in turn, represented mainly by a surprising coalition of West German women activists and East German dissidents, demands that it is "high time to reintroduce the category of morality into politics." The East German dissidents, in particular, are obviously not prepared to continue sacrificing human rights on the altar of peace.

The conflict had become so acute recently that a special party conference needed to be convened in October 1993 in Bonn. There the bellicists suffered a decisive defeat. The overwhelming majority of the party reconfirmed the traditional pacifist creed of unconditional nonviolence by rejecting any military intervention in Bosnia or elsewhere. Yet a paradoxical party declaration indicated that the new conflict cannot be willed away by simple fiat: "The most important consequence of German history for us is: Never again war. But it also is: Never again Auschwitz." Obviously, these implications are contradictory. To the majority of the Greens and their supporters, the most important lesson of German history is captured by the first demand. Yet to an increasingly vocal minority, the prevention of genocide entails special German obligations after Auschwitz that may override the requirements of nonviolence.

The Bonn convention also upheld the perennial Green demands to have Germany exit from NATO and abolish its Bundeswehr. This not only reconfirms the Greens' traditional pacifism, but also attests to their continued discomfort with Germany's integration into the Western alliance structures. The Greens' reflex-like anti-NATO stance is particularly ironic, given that the postcommunist nations of East-Central Europe are now lining up to join the devilish alliance. For Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic, NATO means not only protection from the turmoil of the disintegrating Soviet empire, but also affirmation of their bona fide Western identity.

Outlook

The reaffirmation of Green pacifism represents a serious setback for the Greens. The expected coalition with the Social Democrats after the federal elections of 1994 now looks less likely. But one of the most striking features of the Greens has always been their ability to win electoral successes despite internal turmoil over profile and program. Even after the painful defeat in the 1990 federal elections, the party has bounced back mightily. Alliance 90 and the Greens are now represented in thirteen of the sixteen German state parliaments. They have

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entered coalition governments with Social Democrats and Liberals in Hesse, Bremen, Brandenburg, and Lower Saxony. The core electoral base of the Greens is estimated at a solid 8 percent nationwide, and in recent state elections they have far surpassed this mark.

The Greens are profiting from the avalanche of voter disaffection against "status quo parties" that is creating havoc all across Europe. If a big chunk of this protest vote is likely to go to the Greens, it will go to a party that now appears thoroughly democratic, professionalized, and willing to compromise. A prime example are the Greens (GAL) of Hamburg. Formerly a bastion of dogmatic Fundis, the GAL is now firmly in the hands of Realos—a shift that was recently rewarded with 13 percent of the statewide vote, the best Green election result ever in Hamburg.

In Joschka Fischer, the chubby and witty ex-anarchist and Realo leader, the Greens may possess the greatest political talent in Germany since Bavarian hardliner Franz Joseph Strauss. Fischer's achievement has been to make the Greens acceptable as coalition partners. Under him, the party has grown adept at playing the political game, holding realpolitical gains more important than empty programmatic rhetoric. Thus we may expect a swift reversal of Green positions if a federal government coalition between the Greens and the Social Democrats becomes a numerical possibility.

Nineteen elections on the local, state, federal, and European levels mark 1994 as the "super-election year" in Germany. It is not merely the sheer quantity of the ballots that makes this year so important. Here, as elsewhere in Europe, politics is undergoing significant qualitative changes. The center no longer seems to hold. Although the German political class has good reasons to worry, this is not so for the Greens. In the politics of protest, after all, they are well versed. □

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Paul Hirst

ASSOCIATIVE DEMOCRACY

The conflict between liberal democratic capitalism and state socialism dominated political life for most of this century. Now the political arena is changing radically. The problem is whether we can develop political ideas to make sense of those changes and to guide political action. State socialism is finished as a credible political idea. But liberal democracy is almost moribund, too, something most celebrants of the collapse of communism have failed to notice. In fact the collapse of communism and the stagnation of liberalism are connected. Liberal democracy derived its most powerful legitimation from the threat of ideological dictatorships; whatever its limitations it allowed citizens to criticize and to change their government. Authoritarian regimes and the revival of religious fanaticism in the third world are too distant from us in the West to have the same effect. At the same time the Western public is more and more confused about what government can accomplish and whether voting makes any difference.

We cannot rest content with a stagnant liberalism and the absence of any strategy for reform. Liberal democracy is inadequate precisely because changing political circumstances are making its institutions less and less able to cope. Unless it is supplemented by other ideas, it will fail to adapt to a changing political world.

There are three main reasons why liberal democratic institutions are failing to cope with the new challenges. The first goes back to the beginning of this century, when representative democracies embraced big government and interventionist bureaucracy in order to secure their societies against external threats and internal conflicts. War mobilization, the growth of welfare, and the regulation and support of big business all promoted the growth of large public and private hierarchical administrations. The result was that the institutions of classical liberalism, adequate to superintend a minimal state, were left in place to administer the bureaucratic states of today. Existing democratic institutions provide low levels of governmental accountability to citizens and of public influence on decision making. And it is less and less evident that large bureaucracies, whether public or private, are efficient and that the public gains enough in competent administration to compensate for its loss of control over its affairs.

The second reason is that representative democracy has atrophied, has become more a means of legitimation of centralized and bureaucratic government than a check upon it, at the very time when the expectations of citizens are rising. Mass higher education and individuation are creating large demanding publics, who are reluctant to have government intrude into their affairs. Western societies are also less homogeneous than ever in their values, with ethnic, religious and life-style pluralism far advanced. Distinct communities have very different and often conflicting standards. This means that uniform national services are less acceptable to diverse publics. Modern societies are more and more difficult to govern because of this pluralism, and they are less able to overcome value conflicts through majority decision.

The third reason for the stagnation of liberal democracy is that it has been closely tied to the idea that the nation-state is the primary political community. Liberalism evolved within the context of the sovereign nation-state. For most

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of this century the role of the nation-state has been strengthened. From the 1930s onward, through national macroeconomic management and redistributionist welfare policies states could ensure economic progress and social security within a market economy. Since the early 1970s, however, the effectiveness of national economic management has declined dramatically. Faced with an internationalizing and increasingly volatile economy, in which competition between nations has intensified and growth rates are uncertain, national governments have proved unable to ensure the conditions for prosperity either by traditional Keynesian means or by the monetarist methods that became fashionable in the 1980s. States are by no means powerless in economic terms, but they no longer have reliable instruments of macroeconomic management that can sustain growth and full employment. If public bodies are now able to intervene effectively in the economy it is in their *political* capacity, by promoting cooperation between economic actors and by adopting policies that enable firms to create the microeconomic conditions for competitive success. Increasingly the public bodies able to perform these tasks are not conventional national states but regional governments.

With the end of the cold war the military justifications for the nation-state have weakened too. The world has not become conflict-free, but Western societies no longer face direct military threats. The most serious problems facing Western societies (be they economic, environmental, or social) cannot be tackled primarily at the level of the nation-state. The sites of governance are shifting toward the supranational and the regional levels: to trade blocs like the European Community and to regional governments like the German Länder (substates). It is thus possible that by the early twenty-first century politics will have no "center." Instead, political actors will be confronted with complex overlapping structures of government and social regulation, both public and private, at international, national, and regional levels. The classic institutions of representative government will be even less effective means of accountability than they are now.

Given such complex political structures, which will resemble the conflicting sources of authority of the Middle Ages, we will need a new theory of the distribution of power among these entities. A key task of such a new theory will be to find a means of subjecting transnational corporations to some form of public, democratic control. Liberal democratic theory does not have the resources, without supplementation, to perform these tasks. The institutions that it has become identified with—national parliaments, political parties, and the majority choices of the citizens of a homogeneous political community—seem less than effective means of organizing the new politics.

Liberal democratic politics is stagnant, and economic liberalism is in no better shape. It returned to popularity at the end of the 1970s because it promised renewed prosperity and greater freedom. The market was presented as a different form of democracy, based on consumer sovereignty. Markets, it was claimed, can register popular preferences better than political institutions do because they allow individuals directly to choose the goods and services they want. Such claims assumed that "free" markets would produce widespread prosperity because of their superior allocative efficiency. Yet, after more than a decade of conservative free market policies, the negative results are obvious for all to see. The concept of the allocative efficiency of markets is purely theoretical and can provide no guarantee that markets will deliver the outcomes citizens want—full employment, sustained growth, and social stability. Economic liberalism has provided none of these. It is a doctrine that was bound in practice to favor the rich and the major corporations, under a cloak of rugged individualist rhetoric.

Yet economic liberalism will rule by default in the absence of a new concept of economic governance. It appeals to the growing anti-statist sentiments among the successful in Western societies, who do not want to be "administered" and who resent taxation to support collectivist welfare. State intervention was accepted when the bulk of the population

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were struggling manual workers, but social reforms and rising prosperity have created a society in which the majority perceive themselves to be "middle class" and wish to craft their own consumption of services such as pensions or health care as much as possible. Re-emphasizing collectivism is thus no answer to the failure of economic liberalism. Keynesianism is too one dimensional as a doctrine of economic governance; it is confined to the state manipulation of macroeconomic aggregates to achieve full employment and economic growth. It has little capacity to change the behavior of economic actors by other means. Keynesian policies can at best prevent a slump from accelerating; they can no longer deliver sustained growth.

There are committed democratic socialists who believe that the failure of economic liberalism and Keynesianism will create an opening for radical socialist policies. Some environmentalists also believe that increased regulation of resource use and tough physical planning by government are necessary if environmental catastrophe is to be averted. It would be premature to dismiss such ideas. However, they do face a problem in that such intervention has hitherto depended on the state, and nation-states are now much less effective agencies of government.

Even if renewed socialist solutions are not possible, it is obvious that some new form of economic regulation is needed if stability is to be preserved. There is no such thing as a "market society," for the simple reason that the market is *not* a society. It is a mechanism of exchange that is embedded in other social relationships. In "freeing" the market, economic liberalism actually weakens those relationships. Societies will be unable to survive, and even to compete economically, if they just accept whatever results uncontrolled markets and international competitive pressures produce. If social control is to be restored over the economy it will have to be in a new way: the public powers and economic actors need to achieve a new form of coordination, based upon more localized forms of economic governance. Democratic control of the economy may be achieved by other routes than the policies of elected national governments, in particular by making companies answerable to a wider range of interests.

Is there a political concept that will address all these problems: that can restore the accountability of government, cope with the new complexity of political authority, accommodate the plural values of diverse communities, satisfy the desire of the successful not to be regimented while meeting the needs of the poor, and provide new methods of economic governance? I contend that there is, and that it is called associationalism. It is, like modern liberalism and communism, a product of that great age of ideologies, the nineteenth century. However, the very reasons that led it to lose out to those competitors in the early twentieth century make it a suitable guide to radical renewal in the twenty-first.

Associationalism can be summed up in three basic propositions. The first is that the organization of social affairs should as far as possible be transferred from the state to voluntary and democratically self-governing associations. Associationalism seeks to combine the individual choice of liberalism with the extensive public provision of collectivism. The scale of direct state activity is reduced, but not at the expense of social provision. Associations would be publicly funded for functions such as health or education. This doctrine aims to strengthen government in and through civil society; thus civil society takes on many of the attributes of the public sphere. The effect would be to reduce the role of hierarchical organizations, both public and private, and to promote accountability through the democratic self-government of associations and the devolution of functions to the local level.

The second proposition is that political authority should be decentralized and perform as few functions as are consistent with its role. This is in direct opposition to a long-established trend toward centralization and state omnicompetence. In this doctrine the state ceases to be a central "sovereign" body and the political structure becomes pluralistic as power is shared by a number of agencies. To call this

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structure "federal" risks some confusion, given the high degree of centralization in formally federal states like the United States. Associationalists have always supported the federal principle, but one in which the federation is like an association, the component agencies entering into relations of cooperation as necessity requires.

The third proposition is that as far as possible the economy should be organized on mutualist lines, that is, by means of nonprofit financial institutions and cooperative firms in which both investors and workers have a significant say in their governance.

Associationalism has several intellectual sources: the English advocates of industrial and social cooperation, such as Robert Owen and George Jacob Holyoake; Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the French mutualists; the English political pluralists Frederick William Maitland and John Neville Figgis, developing the ideas of Otto von Gierke; aspects of the French and German corporatist traditions, most notably the ideas of Léon Duguit and Émile Durkheim; and the two most important associationalist writers of this century, G.D.H. Cole and Harold J. Laski. Associationalism failed to have much political influence after the mid-twenties because the political forces on both the left and the right that supported state centralization and collectivism were better adapted to the conditions of the early twentieth century, and in particular the demands of total war. But conditions have now changed radically in the advanced Western societies. If we consider the three propositions advanced above, we shall see what associationalism has to offer.

1. The promotion of self-government through voluntary associations would address three major problems: (1) How to ensure accountability in representative democracies? (2) How to cope with increasingly pluralistic societies with divergent values? and (3) How to enable the successful to enjoy services that have all the benefits of being collective, without being uniform and compulsory, and without at the same time abandoning the poor?

The devolution of social functions to voluntary associations would enable the representative democratic state to become more like a minimal public power again. The state would fund and supervise, but would not be directly responsible for the voluntary self-governing associations that would deliver services in areas like health, education, and welfare. Citizens would choose to join these associations and would have certain entitlements to services, and the associations would receive public funds proportionate to their membership. The institutions of liberal democracy could then function as the agencies of supervision and accountability, unencumbered by direct responsibility for delivering services. Voluntary and democratically self-governing associations could be more loosely supervised than bureaucracies are. In those areas wholly subject to the democratic decision of their members it is the members who bear the consequences. State regulation could be looser and simpler because an association's members would have the power to leave or press for change should any action of that body damage their interests. The state would not have to cover every contingency as it does when regulating large public and private bureaucracies, over which the members of the public have no direct control. Thus the laws could be both less extensive and less complex, making them easier to understand and thus promoting the rule of law. The current tendencies toward increasingly complex legislation lead, on the contrary, to the rule of lawyers and to the alienation of the ordinary citizen.

Voluntarism would also make social provision and social governance less conflictual. Communities would be free to establish their own services in conformity with their own values, subject of course to certain minimum common standards. Each subcommunity could craft the forms of education, health care, and so on that it desired. Each group would govern itself for its own purposes. Individuals would be free to leave and to join other associations, and the law would protect such freedoms. The clashes that now arise over state provision, where each group seeks to get the state to recognize *its* standards as universal, would thus considerably diminish. Different groups and

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associations would certainly have to get used to living side by side, each obeying its own rules and leaving others to do the same. Groups and associations would compete nonpolitically, by seeking to win the allegiance of individuals rather than by trying to impose common laws upon all.

Welfare states are in crisis throughout the advanced world. The well-to-do have become tax averse and less willing to accept the standard services that the state provides. The poor are seen, on the right, as victims of a dependency culture, and, on the left, as disempowered by welfare bureaucracies that deny them control over their affairs. Associational voluntarism would address the dissatisfactions of the affluent and the poor. It would allow the affluent to choose the services they please and to use their public entitlements to pay for them, at least in part. The poor will still only get the minimum entitlements—unless a radical change in attitudes takes place—but they could begin to deal with their own problems in their own way, to gain control of their affairs. Associationalism would enable organizations campaigning for the poor to use public funds to aid poor communities seeking autonomy and reconstruction.

2. The rejection of the "sovereign" state and the creation of a federal structure of authority based upon cooperation rather than hierarchy is now relevant, because the nation-state is ceasing to be the primary arena for politics.

Associationalist and English political pluralist ideas can provide models for the emerging forms of governance that have no single authoritative center. In a world dominated by states, English pluralism seemed counterintuitive. Surely one body had to set the rules and stand above all others in a given territory? We can now see that many important problems are international, such as environmental pollution, and they can only be tackled by agencies that operate across the territories of states. The international arena is becoming crowded with such agencies (some are United Nations bodies, some intergovernmental, some part of an international civil society, like Greenpeace or Amnesty), and yet they remain outside the scope of our political theory. Consider an entity like the European Community (EC). It is neither a superstate nor is it simply an association of sovereign states; rather it is a multinational public power that has specific functions in which it takes priority over the member states. The EC has no armed forces and it has great difficulty agreeing on a common foreign policy. The great danger with institutions like this is that they will evolve blindly without clear political models, sidestepping the issue of accountability. The crisis over the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty showed popular discontent with technocratic government, but it has set back unification. Until the "democracy deficit" is tackled, the Community will lack legitimacy. A new federalism is the only way forward.

3. The third proposition concerns the construction of a more decentralized and mutualist economic system. Surely such objectives are now irrelevant in the face of economic globalization? I contend that the contrary is the case. Just as national governments are losing some powers to international agencies, they are also losing economic regulatory functions to subnational units.

The most successful of these regional economies, like the industrial districts of central Italy, provide models of economic governance based upon public-private cooperation. They achieve competitive success in two ways. Through the provision of collective services, they reduce the costs to firms of key inputs like trained labor and specialized equipment. And, through activities that range from collective marketing, to economic intelligence, to pooled R&D, firms gain from their cooperation with others. Industrial districts thus simulate the forms of voluntary coordination advocated by the associationalists. Some of the most successful manufacturing companies also mimic mutualist relationships: many Japanese firms have contrived a system in which workers are as committed as they might be in a cooperative, treating the company like a community of which they are members. However, these workers have few of the advantages of ownership or control.

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The economies of the advanced nations are internationalizing. This threatens both the democratic control of the economy and the living standards of the less successful nations and regions. Economic internationalization threatens to centralize economic success in a few nations and regions, de-industrializing other areas and diverting their financial resources away from domestic investment. Traditional methods of state intervention—protective tariffs, subsidies and regional aid—are unlikely to be effective in responding to such pressures.

The most effective response is to build up local and mutual financial institutions that are non-profit making but offer investors a guaranteed return. Such bodies would need to be legally protected and underwritten by public funds. They would enable regions to recycle their own capital—pensions, private savings, and so on—to create work and wealth within the region, rather than seeing both siphoned off halfway across the globe. Following from that, public agencies must aid and encourage small- and medium-sized firms to overcome their reluctance to cooperate and their tendency to view other firms solely as competitors. Lastly, public agencies must promote worker involvement, the major source of high productivity. One way to do so is through broad-based training. Another way is to help set up mutualist firms that really do create a community at work, with employee ownership and authority. Such firms are likely to prove tenacious and efficient. The creation of industrial districts and mutualist firms may be a more effective response to international competition than, for example, trying to import Japanese techniques into U.S. or European firms, where management continues to exercise its traditional powers and prerogatives.

Associationalism is neither capitalist nor collectivist; it embraces both cooperation and markets. Its aim is a regulated exchange economy that meets social goals through cooperation among economic actors and public agencies. The present trends toward weakly regulated markets and economic internationalization threaten to create a world that is ungovernable. In it the livelihood of all but a favored few will be insecure, even in the advanced world, and the major beneficiaries will be major transnational corporations beyond effective political, let alone democratic, control. Associationalism offers ways in which these threats may be sidestepped, without placing too much emphasis on the weakening powers of the central state. It has the advantage over most economic doctrines in that it relies on the powers of citizens freely linked together in civil associations. It offers a route to economic revival that is consistent with the traditions of Western liberalism. Most other routes either involve grafting Korean- or Japanese-style interventionism onto liberal democratic states, breaking their obligation to be neutral between one citizen or firm and another, or involve strengthening the autocratic powers of company managements.

One must be careful not to turn associationalism into a monolithic ideology. It is not the solution to every social problem, nor can associationist institutions be built overnight. The old advocates of associationalism were too ambitious and saw it as a complete replacement for both liberal democracy and socialism. However, it can only succeed in modern conditions if it is not seen as a way of completely supplanting such institutions, but as a way of restoring them to effectiveness by radical but practical reform.

Modern associationalism is not a utopian doctrine, nor would it involve the destruction of all other institutions in order to create a society consistent with its principles. It is best seen as a *supplement* to our stagnating political and economic institutions, not as a complete replacement for them. Thus, giving a greater role to voluntary associations, decentralization, and pluralizing political authority would help to restore legitimacy to liberal democracy.

The great advantage of the associative principle is that it can be used to a greater or a lesser degree, depending on political willingness to promote voluntarism and cooperation. Thus political change in this direction can proceed gradually as conditions dictate. Associationalism is also flexible enough to be adopted by a wide variety of social groups: it

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breaks out of the old left-right political spectrum. Thus environmentalists, feminists, ethnic communities, even conservative religious groups could benefit from an enhanced capacity to regulate their own affairs in civil society. Associationalism thus has the potential to be both practical and popular as a new doctrine of social reform and renewal. □

For Further Reading

For an exposition of associationalism, see Paul Hirst, *Associative Democracy*, Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1993 and "Associational Democracy" in David Held (ed.) *Prospects of Democracy*, Polity Press, 1993. On English political pluralism, see Paul Hirst (ed.) *The Pluralist Theory of the State: Selected Writings of G.D.H. Cole, J.N. Figgis, and H.J. Laski*, Routledge, London 1989. On the internationalization of politics, see D. Held, "Democracy, the nation-state and the global system," *Economy and Society* Vol. 20 No. 2, May 1991. For the application of associationalist theory to the United States see Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, "Secondary Associations and Democratic Governance," *Politics and Society* Vol. 20 No. 4 December 1992.

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Michel Wieviorka

FRENCH INTELLECTUALS: END OF AN ERA?

For decades French intellectuals captured the world's imagination through their writings and debates. But since the seventies, their international stature has sharply waned in the wake of the deaths of those—beginning with André Malraux, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Michel Foucault—who seemed the highest embodiment of a figure so typically French, the Intellectual.

In mid-summer 1981, Max Gallo, spokesman for the recently elected socialist government, touched off a controversy in the pages of *Le Monde* with an article on the "silence of the intellectuals," whom he criticized for their lack of enthusiasm for the new venture of the left. There was no longer any doubt that a new era had begun in France, foreshadowed several years earlier by the intellectuals' belated acknowledgment of the Gulag, by the impressive welcome given Solzhenitsyn in 1974 by the "New Philosophers" (which also marked the end of Marxism as a mode of thought and the central reference point for political action), and finally by the many articles and books devoted to the crisis or malaise of the intellectuals.

It is always tricky to posit any direct connection between ideas on the one hand and social change on the other. In this case, however, the exhaustion of the classic French intellectual and the reshaping of intellectual life are clearly tied to the transformations of French society and its international context.

During the period known as the "*Trente glorieuses*"—the name Jean Fourastie gave to the first thirty years after World War II—France could best be described as a "national society," a relatively integrated whole consisting of three elements: society, the state and its institutions, and the nation.

Postwar French *society* was industrial, dominated by the conflict between the employers and the workers' movement. This conflict was rooted in the relations of production, but it shaped social, political, and intellectual life well beyond the confines of the shops and factories. Many consumer, family, cultural, and even sporting associations defined themselves through their opposition to capitalism; the political system was organized around the opposition of left and right, with the left bloc supposedly representing working-class demands. In May 1968, the student movement sought to give its struggle a meaning extending beyond the university by holding out, in fragile hands, the flag of revolution to the workers. Class conflict gave intellectual life its shape: one was either for the workers' movement or against it; a Communist party member, a "fellow traveler," or else an adversary of the party; either a Marxist, a non-Marxist, or an anti-Marxist.

During this period, the French *state* was inspired above all by the ideal of republicanism. This was manifest most clearly in education and the welfare state. The republican ethos was defined by a universalism that extolled egalitarian values. Public schooling—free and mandatory—was intended to create the citizens of the future by offering, in principle, the same chances to each child, regardless of social origin. And the welfare state was supposed to compensate for the most severe social inequities by helping the unemployed, ensuring public health and medical progress, and extending access to such pro-

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grams to one and all. Near the end of this period the state became the object of pointed criticism by intellectuals. The writings of Pierre Bourdieu, Christian Baudelot, and René Establet on the sociology of education contended that the school system actually reproduced and deepened social inequality. More generally, Louis Althusser and Nicos Poulantzas argued that the function of the state was to preside over the replication of the unequal relations of production, and Michel Foucault popularized the notion that every sphere of society was permeated by multifaceted "disciplinary" powers.

Finally, the French *nation* during this period can be described in terms of a dual orientation. In one sense it embodied a universal project: it proclaimed a message of progress, reason, and the rights of man and the citizen to the entire world. This message was broadcast strongly during the end of the colonial era: "modernity" would be brought to those who had previously been the victims of exploitation and condescension. De Gaulle's famous declarations about peoples' rights of self-determination were issued in this spirit.

Within France, universalism was linked to an ethos of economic, cultural, and political progress: the modernization of the infrastructure and of the means of production, the development of education and the extension of democracy. All this was at odds with the type of nationalism that, during the last two centuries, has been based upon opposition to modernity, upon an appeal to an antirepublican, largely xenophobic, and often anti-Semitic Catholic France.

Intellectuals, on the left and on the right, have often argued about the idea of the nation. In his recent book *La France aux français,* Pierre Birnbaum has reminded us of the intensity of the "war of the two Frances," one republican, the other traditional, that has raged ever since the beginning of the Third Republic. Many intellectuals of the left were unable to appreciate the claim that France bore a universal message, since they cast themselves first and foremost as internationalists. And because of colonialism, they frequently developed a hatred for their own nation, of a kind most memorably expressed by Sartre. Still, most of them, without necessarily realizing it, behaved as if they were bearers of a universal message—which they might not have borne so readily had they belonged to a different nation.

An industrial society, a republican state, and a nation at once universal and specific: broadly speaking, this ensemble defined the space within which debate was organized in this country until the seventies—the space in which the liveliest and most meaningful confrontations on social questions took place.

In the last twenty years, all of this has changed. Industrial society has given way to a society that people like Alain Touraine began calling "post-industrial" as early as the late sixties, when it became clear it could no longer be described solely on the basis of the older structural conflict. Social conflict is no longer rooted only in the opposition between exploiters and exploited; it has become a matter of inclusion and exclusion. What counts now is not social relationships, but the lack of them; not the relationship of domination to exploitation, but the growing separation between the excluded and those who "belong"—who continue to work, to earn a salary, and to consume.

The spatial dimensions of this transformation appeared clearly with the onset of the urban crisis. In the early eighties people began to be concerned about urban decay; they began talking, often in exaggerated terms, about ghettos and the lack of safety in the cities. At the same time, the workers' movement was experiencing its historic decline as the unions entered chronic crisis. Today no one would seriously claim that by casting off its chains, the proletariat will liberate all humanity. The worst crises are no longer those of exploited workers, who now almost seem to occupy a privileged position—one they want to protect—but rather those of men and women deprived of work. Consequently, intellectuals can no longer define themselves in terms of a social movement bearing a universal message. If they retain any social conscience, they must concern themselves with the fate of the excluded, of those who have not only been deprived of work and of a place in the relationships of produc-

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tion, but of any capacity for social action beyond periodic riots.

The republican state is now experiencing deep problems. The welfare state has been weakened by rising unemployment and health-care costs and the aging of the population. The educational system increasingly functions like the marketplace: parents with money can place their children in the "good" schools, where immigrant children are few. School directors, in turn, seek to make their schools distinct from one another, in direct contradiction of the republican model. The school question is inseparable from the problem of immigration, and provokes the same passionate responses, as in the "Islamic Scarf" case of 1989. The principal of a junior-high school in Creil refused to allow three Islamic girls to attend class in their scarves, which they said was required by their religion. War broke out over secularism in the schools, and intellectuals participated broadly. Some, like the signers of an appeal published in the weekly *Nouvel Observateur,* demanded that any marks of religious or ethnic distinction be forbidden in the public schools; they denounced the opposing stand as a "Munich of the republican school."

This leads to the third element in our analysis, the national question, which was posed anew in France beginning late in the sixties. First, French Jews began to break with a formula in place since the Revolution, according to which one was a Jew in private, but not in public. The change was brought about by the arrival of Algerian Jews, which reinvigorated the Jewish population in France; by the emotions caused by the Six Day War; and by the weakening of the socialist and communist allegiances to which many Jews had subordinated their Jewish identity. French Jews became more visible and more assertive. Their own concerns, whether religious or cultural, whether pertaining to Israel or anti-Semitism, brought them into the streets to demonstrate. All this called into question the classical model of integration into the French nation and Republic.

At about the same time, regional movements in the Midi, in Brittany, and in Corsica began asserting themselves: they denounced "internal colonialism," the Jacobin heritage of a strong centralized French state, and the threat to their cultural and especially linguistic identity. Here again, the French model of integration was called into question. The right to be different made a forceful entry into political and intellectual life. At the same time, new social movements among women and ecologists were beginning to mark off their own specific identities.

Two additional changes complicated these developments. A national-populist extreme right wing, notably Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, began to gather strength, capitalizing on the fears of those threatened by social change. Second, immigration into France, especially of North Africans, was transformed from an issue of employment to one of repopulation. Ethnic and communal suspicions arose among broad sectors of the French people. In the late 1970s, some intellectuals had begun to argue that France, after an era of grand causes, of heroic social and political conflicts and collective mobilization, had entered a period of social emptiness, atomization, narcissism, post-modernity. This idea was quickly put to rest when it became clear that a movement was forming on the far right that *was* capable of mobilizing broad electoral support—through largely xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic appeals. Previously the immigrant had been defined by his inferior place in the system of production; he was perceived as someone destined for quick assimilation or as a transient figure, an unmarried male who worked in a factory, lived in a residence hall, and went back home as soon as he'd saved enough money. But this image is no longer valid. Now immigrants were defined by other identities—as Muslims, Turks, Arabs, and so on. Taking advantage of measures aimed at reuniting families, they elected, for the most part, to remain in France, and became a significant, and often the most impoverished, sector of the excluded, inhabiting dilapidated districts and suburbs. And they are the favorite target of Le Pen-style national populism, which denounces the "exorbitant"

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benefits they enjoy from public authorities, the advantages they take of the welfare state, and the more-or-less fundamentalist communities that hold them together.

This new situation has considerably weakened the universal, democratic face of French identity; it strengthened a xenophobic face, closed in upon itself. Now it sometimes seems as if the extreme right holds a virtual monopoly on the definition of the nation.

Intellectuals first reacted to these changes by criticizing the extreme right and giving their support to groups like SOS-Racism. (This movement, which appeared in the mid-eighties, broke with more conventional antiracist organizations by specifically appealing to the young. It distributed a yellow hand-shaped badge saying "Hands Off My Pal" throughout the country, organized huge rock concerts, and pursued various media strategies to spread its message.) Intellectuals have also chastised the media for providing a forum for the National Front and its leader. In some cases they have accused each other of allowing themselves to be used by the far right. In July 1993 forty intellectuals signed an "Appeal to Vigilance," a statement about the dangers posed by the far right. Published in *Le Monde,* it was accompanied by a long article on "the confusion of ideas," delineating the ways in which the far right supposedly manipulated the Parisian intelligentsia.

There are other examples of intellectual agitation: debates about the "Americanization" of French national culture and its penetration by the values of mass consumerism; debates about the French language and its decline on the world scene; controversies surrounding nationality, the politics of immigration, and the policies to be adopted regarding Islam, which is now becoming the second religion in the country. In these discussions there is a real risk that superficial quarrels will displace real debates about ideas, just as the collapse of socialism and communism have made it difficult to pose substantive problems about the nature of our society. One even senses the danger of a French version of "political correctness" and the substitution of personal antagonisms or name-calling for intellectual exchange.

Reshaping the Intellectual Sphere

French intellectual life is changing radically, as attention focuses on new social problems. Several basic attitudes are emerging.

One orientation can simply be called "republican," as Regis Debray has suggested. It appeals to the classical model of integration that is now under threat; it is faithful to traditional republican ideals and, in its leftist versions, to social democratic projects and the values of the welfare state. A second orientation, which can be called "national republican," seeks to uphold a French identity that it believes is menaced by the internationalization of economy and culture, as well as by the unification of Europe. On this turf, the right is traditionally better placed than the left, although there are leftists with this orientation. National republicanism is marked by a sharp tension originating in the age-old contradictions of the French concept of the nation. Seen in universal terms, France is associated with the themes of democracy and human rights; seen in the perspective of "difference," the singularity of an inward-looking French nation is stressed. This latter perspective, represented by such mainstream conservative politicians as Charles Pasqua and Philippe Seguin, probably is shared by the majority of French citizens these days, if we are to judge by the weak reaction to recent restrictive measures on immigration and the nationality code enacted by Balladur's conservative government and inspired by national-republicanism.

A third orientation, following Debray's terminology, might be called democratic. It proposes to combine universal values long associated with French republican idealism—values such as reason and democracy—with a policy of tolerance toward cultural, religious, and ethnic minorities. Democracy thereby remains capable of accommodating very diverse demands and interests, even if they carry little electoral weight.

Taken together, these three orientations outline a new intellectual map in which the classic left-right opposition is being reinvented. And it is likely that attitudes toward international politics, whether about the war in former

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Yugoslavia, the North-South dichotomy, the construction of Europe or relations with the United States, will soon evolve—indeed they are already evolving—from these different orientations toward the internal problems of French society.

At the same time, each of the three main orientations is susceptible of being radicalized in disturbing ways. The republican orientation, in its "pure" form, denies any place in the public sphere for particular cultural identities. It is unable to grasp that these identities are often the only source of meaning for socially and economically excluded groups. The national republican orientation can degenerate into racism and xenophobia. (In political terms, the conservative government's embrace of this outlook represents a barrier to the radical national populism of the National Front—why go to Le Pen if a party in power speaks like this?—but it's a fragile, porous barrier, which can quickly be transformed into a sieve.)

Finally, the democratic orientation can open the way to pluralistic excess and a destructive babel of identities. Radical self-affirmation by various minorities can engender radical responses from the majority—a reassertation of conservative traditionalism. The consequence may be intercultural clashes, and the type of violence that is the hallmark of social disintegration. This issue emerged within SOS-Racism and its intellectual supporters, who have often promoted a multicultural, multiracial society at the risk of encouraging a dangerous identity dialectic. During the Persian Gulf conflict, for example, some of SOS-Racism's leaders opposed French participation in the anti-Iraq alliance, out of sensitivity to the opinion of young North Africans, the children of immigrants to France. This in turn provoked the departure from the movement of many Jewish intellectuals.

The Image of the Intellectual

In the context of these transformations, the French intellectual has been forced to change. Certainly, the traditional image retains its power, even if one is not overcome by nostalgia for Malraux or Sartre. The essential fact, however, is that the classic figure of the French intellectual—who was identified with knowledge and reason, with justice and a sense of history, with the people and the revolution—is fading. Intellectuals of the classical model tended to scorn the social sciences. The idea of a sociology deploying scientifically tested methods and field research was foreign to them. But in recent years a growing group of researchers has focused on producing concrete information on the great social and cultural issues confronting France. Historians interested in the memory of the nation—what Pierre Nora has called "*les lieux de la memoire*" (places of memory)—are pursuing new fields like the history of immigration to France. Political science has greatly developed the study of the far-right National Front, and sociologists have pursued new types of research on Islam, new religious phenomena, the urban crisis, the problems of the educational system, and the rise of racism and xenophobia, among other areas.

This doesn't mean that classical intellectuals have simply exited the scene by one door, yielding their place to professional social scientists, who are entering by another. But it does mean that the conditions that fashioned the French model of the Great Intellectual are no longer with us today. France can no longer present itself as a universal nation, for it lives a specific life, with a particular identity that often feels threatened. Hence the desire to protect French culture and the demand, expressed by Paris in the GATT negotiations last fall, that the cultural domain be an "exception" to the rules of international commerce.

The Great Intellectual is, at least for now, anachronistic. The project of the generalist yields more and more to specialization (to borrow Foucault's distinction), a development reinforced by cultural fragmentation, the increasing separation of power and politics from the life of ideas, and the ever-growing importance of the market and money.

Translated from the French
by JOHN ALZALONE □

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Anson Rabinbach

MEMORIES OF ASSASSINS, ASSASSINS OF MEMORY

Recent French Struggles with the Past

In June of last year René Bousquet, former general secretary of the interior and chief of the Vichy police, was murdered in the doorway of his Paris apartment. His death was the ultimate postponement of a long-delayed trial for crimes against humanity, scheduled to begin sometime this year. Had it taken place, it might have provided the opportunity to publicly put the Vichy regime on trial and openly discuss the involvement of the French administration in anti-Jewish laws and in the deportations of the Jews to the Nazi death camps. However, the incident was only the last chapter in the story of how Bousquet was able to escape justice for so long. Initially charged with organizing the Jewish roundups, Bousquet was absolved by the High Court in 1949, going on to become a successful banker and journalist. Indeed, his long-standing association with President François Mitterrand may explain the many obstacles placed in the way of a new trial, which those who have documented his activities, like the lawyer Serge Klarsfeld, began to demand in the late 1970s.

The Bousquet story underscores the fact that France continues to be uniquely haunted by the problem of history and memory. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the widely shared myth of a national resistance to Nazi barbarism was able to keep fiercely competing memories of the Occupation and the Liberation from erupting into public awareness.

Since the 1970s, however, revelations of the extent of French complicity with Nazism and Vichy, the notorious Faurisson Affair, and the trial of Klaus Barbie have contributed to making French struggles with memory into a national obsession.

As the distinguished medievalist Jacques Le Goff observes, until only recently " 'history and memory' were practically fused in the commemoration of the past." Historians have now turned their attention to studying how history and memory are distinct if not competing ways of regarding the past.

This new preoccupation of historians and intellectuals also attests to an important shift away from the original historiographical program of the prestigious *Annales* School. Since the early 1930s *Annales* historians relentlessly exorcised event-oriented political history, substituting problem-oriented, demographic, social, and ethnographic history. Their suspicion of "events" was understandable in a century so rich in cataclysms (the *Annales* co-founder Marc Bloch was killed by the Germans in 1944). Yet France's recent struggles over memory have exhibited not the disappearance of events—as the *Annales* once anticipated—but their stubborn persistence. Not surprisingly, historian Pierre Nora, editor of a multivolume history of French national memory (*Les lieux de mémoire*) has acknowledged "the return of the event."

Still, few historians have been able to bring the relatively fresh memories of this century's catastrophic events into focus as the subject of historical inquiry. To have done this with style and historical depth is the remarkable achieve-

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ment of Henry Rousso's *The Vichy Syndrome*. The syndrome in Rousso's title refers to the manifold "symptoms" produced by the "trauma" of the Occupation and the persistence of its memory in the postwar period. Despite a predilection for words like "trauma" and "mourning," Rousso's choice of a psychoanalytic vocabulary does not extend far beyond his chapter headings. Chronicling the intense conflicts that erupted in France during and after Vichy—between the sense of defeat and the false pride promoted by Marshal Pétain, between collaboration and resistance, between liberation and reconstruction—Rousso considers "it not unreasonable to refer to them collectively as a civil war."

The central figure orchestrating the memory of the Occupation during the postwar years was General Charles de Gaulle. With characteristic immodesty, de Gaulle regarded himself as the embodiment of a unified and vindicated France: the nation in arms. Under de Gaulle, Resistance became a grand abstraction, fetishized and installed "in the Pantheon of republican values."

The state promoted the memory of a nation united against a foreign occupier while the left continued to battle against the remnants of Vichy and collaboration. After the Liberation, the purge (*épuration*) of collaborators was conducted unevenly and politically, frequently obscuring the distinction between revenge and law. Its lasting effect was to establish permanent divisions, which coexisted uneasily with officially sanctioned commemorations of national unity. Most quickly forgotten were those who belonged neither to Vichy nor the Resistance—the survivors of the deportations: "The return of victims from the Nazi concentration camps was the event most quickly effaced from memory."

During the 1950s, the memory of the Occupation became "a vast reservoir of symbolic references upon which the political parties drew." In the heyday of the cold war, the right found its footing as former collaborators were amnestied. At the dawn of the cold war, it became apparent even to de Gaulle that the nostalgia for Pétain, for "glory and sacrifice," and for a France uncontaminated by communism, could be serviceable. In June 1951, a former Resistance leader, Gilbert Renaud (*nom de guerre*, General Rémy) dared put in print what many already thought, that the "France of June 1940 needed both Marshal Pétain and General de Gaulle." If de Gaulle was not prepared to take that step in public—in fact he disavowed it—the Rémy Affair revealed his private acquiescence. Rémy publicized a December 1946 conversation in which the General is supposed to have remarked that "it was not a bad thing that France should have two strings in her bow, one in the hands of de Gaulle, and the other in the hands of Pétain, provided both would be in accord with the sole benefit of the nation." De Gaulle, as Rousso notes, "gave voice to ambiguities in a past that was being made to suit the present situation."

The parable of the "two strings" reconciled two national memories, one of defeat with honor, the other of victory with compassion. It was echoed throughout the 1950s and consecrated by the analogy of the sword (de Gaulle) and the shield (Pétain), most notably in Robert Aron's *Histoire de Vichy* published in 1954. Indeed, during the fierce debates over the Algerian War "analogy became a way of laying claim to a political heritage," even if the alignments were sometimes new. The right

Books Discussed in this Essay

Alain Finkielkraut, *Remembering in Vain: The Klaus Barbie Trial & Crimes Against Humanity*, trans., Roxanne Lapidus with Sima Godfrey. Columbia University Press, 1992.

Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans., Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman. Columbia University Press, 1992.

Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. Free Press, 1993.

Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans., Arthur Goldhammer. Harvard University Press, 1991.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust*, trans., Jeffrey Mehlman. Columbia University Press, 1992.

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insisted on invoking Vichy in its battle to keep Algeria French, while some former members of the Resistance, like Georges Bidault, described the anti-independence movement as a revival of national resistance.

Rousso draws up a brief catalogue of some of the ways that the past can be mobilized: as heritage, as nostalgia, and as fantasy. For all of these, Gaullist pomp could be a powerful instrument. In the mid-1960s, Minister of Culture André Malraux, at the request of the Resistance organizations, promoted the idea that the ashes of Jean Moulin, the hero of Lyon, be transferred to the Pantheon. In an elaborate two-day ceremony, the General managed to upstage his old subordinate, relegating the Resistance to a bit part. The ceremony "Gaullized" Moulin and demonstrated the axiom of the Gaullist myth of the Resistance: the Resistance equals de Gaulle; de Gaulle equals France; hence the Resistance equals France. The fabrication of a usable version of the Occupation was not just the preoccupation of statesmen, intellectuals, and *anciens combatants*. In 1959, two cartoonists working for the newspaper *Pilote* reinvented the immortal Gaul in the character of Astérix, who conquers the Goths and slugs it out with Gallo-Roman collaborators.

Rousso's admiration for de Gaulle's symbolic sixth sense is often so great—even as he reveals Gaullist memory to be a synonym for forgetting—that he finds it difficult to explain why the General's myth exploded after May 1968. Much of the credit, he says, goes to Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1970), the first film "about the memory, as distinct from the history, of the Occupation." Ophuls's film offered a counter-myth to the official Gaullist version, exposing a France more divided by internal schisms than united by the struggle against the foreign occupier. Rousso points out that the film all but obliterated the truths of the official myth, ignoring the military, the organization, the patriotism of the Resistance and—most prominently—de Gaulle himself. Typical of his generation, Sartre hated it: he saw its refusal to uphold the myth of national heroism as an utter disregard for "political truth."

By the early 1970s the "*mode rétro*" for the war years was in its heyday. At least on the left, obsession with France's collaborationist past threatened to overshadow the accomplishments of the Resistance. The danger, as Stanley Hoffman pointed out, was that one myth would be replaced by another. The moral heroism of the Resistance was displaced by the moral cowardice of collaboration.

If the long-cherished ideal of the unified nation resisting the Nazi yoke was unraveling, the distinction between Vichy and Berlin was officially refurbished. In 1972 a national scandal erupted when Prime Minister Georges Pompidou pardoned Paul Touvier, head of the notorious Milice (militia) in Lyon, at the same moment that Klaus Barbie, Gestapo chief in that city, was arrested in Bolivia at the request of the French government. In a statement issued at the time of the affair, Pompidou asked if the time hadn't "come to draw a veil over the past, to forget a time when Frenchmen disliked one another, attacked one another, and even killed one another?"

The precipitous collapse of the Gaullist myth also helps explain why the Faurisson Affair became a public sensation in 1979. As *The Sorrow and the Pity* shattered the "mirror" of Gaullist consensus, and as once incontestable truths about the Resistance and collaboration were shaken almost daily, French intellectuals were prepared to believe what Rousso calls "the negationist message" which "immersed itself in the reinterpretation, the revision, of the history of the 1940s that had been under way for a decade." The pro-Arab stance of French foreign policy in the 1970s reawakened the slumbering issue of wartime anti-Semitism and the cooperation of Vichy in the deportations of the Jews. Memories of Vichy were also stirred by the Darquier Affair, a scandalous interview given by the ruthless former head of Vichy's Office of Jewish Affairs, Darquier de Pellepoix, who maintained, among other things, that "at Auschwitz only the lice were gassed." In the context of the Darquier interview, the broadcast of the U.S. television drama "Holocaust" (initially rejected by the state broadcasting system), the indictments of several former Vichy officials, and, finally, the bombing of

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the synagogue on the rue Copernic, the stage was set to propel the Faurisson Affair into the national spotlight.

Robert Faurisson created an uproar, not as a public figure, but as the mouthpiece for a tiny group of post-Marxists, who by protesting alleged infringements on his civil liberties managed to attract the sympathy of several prominent left-wing intellectuals. It is not immediately evident why the ravings of an obscure professor of literature who claimed to offer scientific "proof" that the Holocaust was a fabrication should be perceived as a threat to the memory of the Nazi era. So-called Holocaust "revisionists" also exist in America and Britain, where they are taken as seriously as sightings of Elvis.

The history of the French left is central to an understanding of the Faurisson Affair. One of the few weaknesses of Rousso's account is that it pays far less attention to how the left fell prey to "the Vichy Syndrome" than it does to the reemergence of the right. (His chapters on the revival of "Pétainism" in postwar France are fascinating, as are the connections he draws to Jean-Marie Le Pen, the chief beneficiary of "Pétainist" nostalgia.)

The Faurisson Affair became a crisis of self-understanding for the left not because Faurisson himself was a radical (his genealogy is on the right) but because his arguments were used to shore up a deteriorating anti-Zionism by radicals who had crossed over into a political twilight zone, where left-wing ideology merged with anti-Semitic hallucination.

The Faurisson Affair became a crisis for the left also because it underscored the myriad ways that antifascism had obliterated the memory of the victims of the deportations and the extermination camps. Faurisson's supporters radicalized the logic of an ideology that already effaced the barbarity of anti-Semitism by insisting that Nazi policies had been based on political and economic motives rather than on racial ideology. This point is best illuminated by *Assassins of Memory*, a collection of essays documenting the decade-long battle of Pierre Vidal-Naquet, an eminent classicist and a leading figure in the opposition to the Algerian War, to expose the stratagems of France's "revisionists." In 1980 Vidal-Naquet published "A Paper Eichmann," to this day one of the most effective responses to Holocaust denial. In that essay he explained part of the attraction of Holocaust denial for the sectarian "old Moles" (*La Vielle Taupe* was the name of their Paris bookstore and publishing house) who adopted the Lyon professor. The odyssey of *Socialisme ou Barbarie?*, the Trotskyist group from which the Moles split off, had reached a point where, in order to uphold the purity of revolutionary anticapitalism, they had to obliterate any distinction among bourgeois democratic, fascist, Stalinist, social democratic, and third-world regimes. The need to uphold the delusion of a transparent and conspiratorial world order is the common coin for many of those—both on the left and the right—who ultimately found their way to the "revisionist" enterprise.

Consider for example the strange itinerary of the "founder" of French Holocaust denial, Paul Rassinier. A former socialist and communist, Rassinier was an authentic member of the Resistance who was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to the Buchenwald and Dora camps. After the war, he emerged as a fervent anti-Semite and anticommunist, producing the prototype of all denial literature, *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, in 1950. Rassinier's aim, as Alain Finkielkraut put it, was to blur the distinction between victims and executioners in order to "fit one war into the other." If there was no Holocaust—no "grand alibi"—then nothing distinguishes the crimes of Nazism from the crimes of the totalitarian East and the imperialist West. Contemporary history becomes as flat as the medieval map of the world.

Deborah E. Lipstadt traces Rassinier's career as well as those of several American Holocaust "deniers" (a term she prefers to "revisionists") in her informative *Denying the Holocaust*. According to Lipstadt, Rassinier apparently exerted an influence on Harry Elmer Barnes, an American historian who during the 1920s had argued that Germany was not responsible for World War I. In one incident, Barnes visited the exiled Kaiser Wilhelm II, who was, he

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reported, "happy to know that I did not blame him for starting the war in 1914." Barnes subsequently became an avowed Germanophile and an indefatigable isolationist. He discounted reports of German atrocities, blamed England and France for starting the war, and, in the 1930s, extolled the Führer's peaceful intentions and reasonableness. After World War II Barnes pursued the same line. He called Roosevelt's foreign policy "the greatest public crime in human history," insisted that German savagery was "exaggerated," and expressed doubt as to whether the Holocaust had occurred. Though left-wing French "deniers" have made common cause with neo-Nazis and right-wing racists, American Holocaust denial flowed directly out of right-wing isolationism and anti-Semitism. The impulse to equivalence is nevertheless the same: without the extermination of the Jews, Nazism disappears in a haze of tyrannical regimes.

Vidal-Naquet and Lipstadt are both aware that their books might offer legitimacy to a slander not open to discussion. They agree that no debate can take place between "revisionists" and "exterminationists." Lipstadt also points out that since Auschwitz effectively discredited so-called scientific racism, the anti-Semitism of the intelligentsia has reappeared as the pseudoscholarship of denial. Her study is warranted, she asserts, not by any need to refute the "denier's" specious arguments, but by the fact that Holocaust denial "has increased in scope and intensity since the mid-1970s." To demonstrate the growing effectiveness of Holocaust denial in infiltrating the public mind, Lipstadt cites a variety of examples: the presence of "deniers" on television talk shows, the proliferation of no-Holocaust literature in the Arab world, public opinion polls in Italy, remarks by Pat Buchanan that the gas chambers at Treblinka were a technical impossibility, and comments by Croatian president Franjo Tudjman about the "biased testimonies and exaggerated data" used to estimate Holocaust victims.

However disturbing such a collage of protorevisionism might be, it does not in my view amount to an urgent threat, nor does it prove Lipstadt's assertion that "deniers" are making inroads into the "mainstream" or the American educational establishment. The only reputable scholar to have defended Faurisson (contributing a notorious *Preface* to his *Mémoire en défence*) remains Noam Chomsky, who still denies ad nauseam (most recently in a celebratory documentary film) that he did anything more than defend Faurisson's civil rights. As Vidal-Naquet points out, this claim is belied by Chomsky's "friendly" exchange of letters with Faurisson, as well as by his preface, in which he said that he had found "no credible proof" that Faurisson was an anti-Semite. In a 1987 postscript to his 1981 article "On Faurisson and Chomsky," Vidal-Naquet notes that Chomsky has since "somehow disavowed not his text, but the use that had been made of it with his agreement as a preface to Robert Faurisson's book." Chomsky has also published a volume of rebuttals, *Réponses inédites à mes détracteurs parisiens*, prefaced by Pierre Guillaume, France's leading publisher of denial literature. Recently, John Toland, the prolific historian, has lent his name to the publications of the Institute for Historical Review in Torrance, California, U.S. headquarters of Holocaust denial, founded by Willis R. Carto, a far-right publicist whose career Lipstadt documents. But Toland is not an academic, and Lipstadt's fear of an insidious spread of denial arguments in the halls of academe seems unwarranted.

Lipstadt's search for climatic conditions favorable to the spread of denial occasionally leads her off course. She indiscriminately accuses "scholars" in general, and "deconstructionist history" in particular, of having fostered a climate in which "no fact, no event, and no aspect of history has any fixed meaning or content." In fact, one of the best sendups of the circularity of Holocaust denial comes from Jean-François Lyotard, the arch postmodern/poststructuralist: since only the dead can be valid eyewitnesses for the existence of gas chambers there are no such witnesses, ergo, no gas chambers. Deconstruction's critical reading and dismembering of texts has had little influence on the "scientific" style of argument pursued by "deniers." As Vidal-Naquet's translator, Jeffrey Mehlman, notes, there is a

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good deal of irony in the circumstance that the language of the revisionists is so unabashedly "positivist." A century earlier this scientistic mood provided "the initial ambience of those fighting—during the heroic phase—for a judicial review of the Dreyfus case." In a bizarre parody of the "Affair," the obsessive marshalling of "facts," "statistics," and "doubt about the authenticity of evidence" has been the modus operandi of "deniers."

It is important to distinguish between revisionism and the kind of extreme relativism that does not deny the Holocaust but "compares" it into oblivion, as did Ernst Nolte's notorious statements during the German historians controversy of 1987. This apologetic use of historical comparisons—which does not discredit all attempts to contrast historical events--is hardly a monopoly of the German right. It reached a crescendo during the trial of Klaus Barbie, when Jacques Vergès, Barbie's defense attorney—part showman, part trickster, and a courtroom virtuoso—pursued the strategy of putting France and "the West" on trial for its crimes in Algeria, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Vergés's record of defending victims of colonialism somehow went together with his shadowy connections to neo-Nazis, like the Swiss millionaire François Genoud (who financed Barbie's defense). In the Lyons courtroom, anti-Semitism blended with the anticolonialism of fools.

Alain Finkielkraut's report on the Barbie trial, *Remembering in Vain*, is a passionate appeal on behalf of the Nuremberg principle, on which the charge of "crimes against humanity" rests. For Finkielkraut, the legal doctrine formulated by the allies between 1942 and 1945, that individuals could be prosecuted for "the criminal exercising of the power of the state," was nothing short of "a momentous judicial event"—even if it simply brought the classical tradition of the rights of man to bear on national sovereignty. Finkielkraut identifies the ethical implication of Nuremberg as the legal sanctioning of punishment for the crimes of a state that are not specifically war crimes. Nuremberg overturned the principle of "reason of state" by giving legal credibility to a morality and a justice superior to power and state authority. In the cataclysm of genocide, he maintains, the court recognized the vulnerability of humanity itself and consecrated the principle of human responsibility—as opposed to that of states or power.

Ironically, the very universalism that briefly triumphed at Nuremberg threatened to become the Lyons trial's undoing. From the outset, Barbie's arrest provoked a legal dispute over two distinct visions of justice and two distinct historical memories: that of the Jewish descendants of the children of Izieu deported by Barbie, and that of Resistance fighters—most notably the hero Jean Moulin—tortured and put to death by the Gestapo chief. The Jewish organizations insisted that Barbie be tried solely for the deportations of Jews, fearing that once again the Resistance would be commemorated at the expense of the extermination. Moreover, in the past, members of the Resistance had always preferred the status of combatants to the status of "victims." Initially the court chose to exclude the Resistance claims, since the statute of limitations and the London Charter (on which Nuremberg was based) specifically excepted from crimes against humanity those illegal acts committed against a military organization, which, it held, were covered under the heading of "war crimes." The Supreme Court of Appeals, however, overthrew a lower court decision and decided in favor of the broader definition demanded by the Resistance organizations. Even before the trial began, two different versions of memory, two different versions of justice, were at odds.

At the time of the Eichmann trial in 1961, Hannah Arendt and the German philosopher Karl Jaspers believed that the charge of "crimes against the Jewish people" and the Jerusalem venue of the trial would restrict the scope of justice. Though Arendt did not deny that it was right for an Israeli court to judge a crime whose chief victims were Jews, she believed that Eichmann should be tried for "crimes against humanity" before an international tribunal. As she put it: "The very monstrousness of the events is 'minimized'

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before a tribunal that represents one nation only." The Barbie case threatened to unleash the opposite danger, that a tribunal that included both Jewish victims and members of the Resistance, each representing distinct memories and crimes, might make the charge of "crimes against humanity" evaporate in the mist of comparison. Once again, the Holocaust appeared to be overshadowed. By creating confusion over what crimes were to be included in the charge, the court itself may have intensified rather than dispelled the ambiguity of the Nuremberg principle.

This opportunity was exploited with gusto by Barbie's defense team, composed, not incidentally, of Vergès, who is of French-Vietnamese descent, a Congolese lawyer, and an Algerian lawyer. Their aim was to "wipe out Nuremberg" by putting the West on trial, by declaring the Jews "chosen martyrs," and by saying, on behalf of non-white "humanity," that "*your* disaster is not *its* business." Instead of aligning themselves with resistance to terror—as did two Algerian intellectuals who protested their tactics—they declared European humanity to be indiscriminately terrorist in their effort to exonerate the terrorist in the dock. The historical failure of "crimes against humanity" to be applied after Nuremberg, and beyond the single crime against the Jews, was turned against the Nuremberg principle itself.

As Finkielkraut emphasizes, a principle that only applies to a single case, even if the case is unique, is of no value. If the Nuremberg principle was applied only once, and to a project of annihilation so vast that it defies comparison, it leaves us powerless in the face of genocides that go unrecognized (like the Armenian massacre) because no state will prosecute them. The "betrayed hope of Nuremberg" paradoxically becomes, as it did in Lyons, an argument for exoneration. If only crimes against the Jews are included in the charge, Nuremberg is eviscerated. Yet, if the charges are extended to include "other" crimes, the defense can legitimately introduce into evidence crimes committed by the French—indeed by all Western nations. If crimes against humanity go unpunished every day, why should the Butcher of Lyons be prosecuted forty-five years later? And if many of those crimes were committed by "the West," isn't Nuremberg simply the victors' justice, masking their own transgressions? As the defense sought to exploit these dilemmas, the Barbie case rapidly became, in Finkielkraut's words, "not an exemplary continuation of the Nuremberg Trials," but a "mockery."

In this regard, Finkielkraut may ultimately credit Barbie's lawyers with too much success. The point, he grudgingly admits, is not that Vergès's totalitarian antiracism won the day, but that he was "rejected as a fanatic." At the very moment that the anticolonialist left was collapsing, the defense took the logic of anti-imperialism to its most grotesque conclusion. The attempt to exonerate Barbie by turning anticolonialism against antifascism was not merely a flop, it was the denouement of the disintegrating political culture of the extreme left. Finkielkraut's entirely understandable antipathy to the corrosive lack of principle that Vergés personifies blurs his judgment about the ultimate impact of the defense's strategy.

It is interesting to compare Vidal-Naquet's reaction with Finkielkraut's. Recalling his own stance against military terror in Algiers, Vidal-Naquet sums up the logic of Barbie's defense: "But if one [that is, the French State] refused to admit that the crimes of the French army were crimes—without statute of limitation—against humanity, then one would also have to forgo trying Barbie . . . at least for equivalent crimes." This difficulty, he says, does not apply, since the crimes of the French army were "*against* the laws of the republic, whereas those of Himmler and Eichmann were in *conformity* with Hitler's principle." But even if that were not the case, one torture does not excuse another, no more than the failure to prosecute one crime precludes the prosecution of another. Yet Vidal-Naquet recognizes that the Barbie case makes it possible to conclude that there are "insurmountable contradictions, no doubt, for anyone dreaming of a coherent system of justice."

Vidal-Naquet's battle with the so-called revisionists prompts him to reflect on the "test to which revisionism puts the historian." He

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asks how one can "situate the 'revisionist' enterprise" once the historian acknowledges that writing is neither "neutral nor transparent" and that "events are not things." His "confusion of feelings" after a decade of combat against Holocaust deniers leads him at once to pose and resist the melancholy question: "Does this mean that one should capitulate in the face of such denial, sliding bit by bit toward a world in which all things are equivalent, the historian and the forger, fantasy and reality, massacres and car accidents?" His answer, of course, is that denial offers neither a "true narrative" nor an authentic revision, but simply a fraud, a "parody of History." Yet, beyond drawing the zero-degree line of facticity against denial, how does the struggle against revisionism impinge on what he calls the "shattered realm of historical discourse"? Vidal-Naquet offers a modified historicism: "the present may transform the *image* of what the past was," but there still remains an unchanging "past in its reality."

Vidal-Naquet's rather overcast reflections, written in 1987, stand somewhat apart from his elegant and lucid polemics written during the heat of the Faurisson Affair. Unlike Lipstadt, who pursues a straight-ahead case against the conspiracy of the "deniers," Vidal-Naquet recognizes that rival claims to memory and history generated in this century prevent the historian from simply juxtaposing mythology, or even memory, to history without acknowledging the problematic nature of these concepts. If Lipstadt strikes an urgent note, Vidal-Naquet's approach is cool, ironic, and in the end, melancholic. This may only partly result from the stereotypical difference between a combative American professor of religious studies and a world-weary French historian *aprés le combat*. Mehlman suggests another explanation for Vidal-Naquet's wistfulness. The link to the Dreyfus Affair may lie less in the relation of one "revisionism" to another, than "in the left-wing aversion to the struggle against anti-Semitism at the time of the Affair, on the one hand, and the lingering left-wing distrust of the politics of antifascism on the other."

More specifically, he wonders if the appearance of *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* by Vidal-Naquet's close associate Arno Mayer, did not take its toll "on the Frenchman's spirits" because—and despite its strong antirevisionist statements—Mayer appeared to offer a "carefully hedged concession" to the deniers in his remark that "sources for the study of the gas chambers are at once rare and unreliable." Vidal-Naquet carefully corrects Mayer's assertion in a footnote to a recent book by Jean-Claude Pressac. He never directly engages Mayer's insistence on the primacy of anti-Bolshevism (rather than anti-Semitism) in the hierarchy of Nazi intentions or his view that the "Judeocide" was a compensation for the halting of the German crusade against the Soviet Union. (See Christopher Browning's review of Mayer's book in *Dissent*, Summer 1989). But Vidal-Naquet apparently fears that when we are faced with a battleground of antagonistic memories, the inability to judge might eventually become a far more threatening "assassin of memory" than a mere sect of Holocaust "deniers."

Similarly, Finkielkraut warns that we are approaching a "fatal deadline of historicization," after which ethical claims to justice can no longer be processed. The competing claims on history exacted by states, courts, public memorials, veterans' groups, films, educational institutions and even by historians contribute to what Rousso calls the "diversity" and "intensity" of "collective memory." However, if the collective memory of an event is shaped "by all representations of that event," this implies that "historical truth (and not just the truth of historians) is in essence relative, changeable, and subject to constant reinterpretation." These recent works on French struggles to preserve memory from its potential assassins remind us that at best historical writing can strive not for objectivity but for a constant negotiation between contextualization and resistance to the manipulation of memory for political ends. There is no place for either the absolute self-righteousness of a memorializing history or for the absolute historicism that guarantees, as Walter Benjamin once put it, that "even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins." □

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After NAFTA

Michael Merrill

A NEW ABOLITIONISM

Labor's recent, unsuccessful campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) tapped a deep well of rank-and-file anger and frustration. For nearly twenty years now, trade unionists and other working people have borne the brunt of an industrial restructuring accompanied by the destruction of millions of jobs, a continuing decline in real hourly earnings for nonsupervisory employees, an across-the-board assault on traditional work practices and contractual protections, more temporary and part-time employment, increased responsibility without any significant increase in control, longer hours, rising insecurity, and a precipitous drop in trade-union membership. The proposed agreement among the United States, Canada, and Mexico provided a convenient and obvious target for outrage. Here, at last, was a chance to shout "No!" Unlike the countless, supposedly "private" corporate decisions that have played the greatest part in the ongoing restructuring, NAFTA required legislation—which could be blocked. And Canada's experience after implementation of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA)—including the disappearance of one out of every four manufacturing jobs—seemed to offer a sober warning of what lay in store. Moreover, the backroom, closed-door nature of the debate added fuel to the fire. Because of the "fast-track" rules under which the agreement was negotiated and voted upon, the labor movement—together with the rest of the public—was given only the narrowest slip of ground from which to influence its provisions or mobilize against it.

As a result, when the AFL-CIO, along with others, drew a line in the sand and pulled out all the stops to block NAFTA's approval, working people across the country stood and cheered. Finally they had a chance to declare themselves in opposition—not just singly or plant by plant, but all together and all at once. Unfortunately, NAFTA was the wrong place to draw the line. Nationalistic trade policies like those championed by NAFTA's opponents, including the AFL-CIO, are counterproductive. They do nothing to reverse the economic restructuring that has already occurred and little to prevent further restructuring from occurring in the future. Moreover, they not only drive an emotional and political wedge between working people in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, but they also divide workers within the United States—especially those in import-vulnerable industries from those in export-competitive industries; those in the South and West from those in the North and East; and recent immigrants with close ties to the countries being "protected" against from those with other backgrounds and connections. In the end, labor's campaign against NAFTA may actually have set back rather than pushed forward efforts to create the political and institutional conditions for a new social contract that would protect the living standards and working conditions of wage earners throughout the expanding global economy.

NAFTA's opponents, of course, saw their opposition to the accord as the precondition for any such "new social contract." The agreement's chief critics were not opposed to free trade in general, which they allowed ought to be a cornerstone of the new international economy. They simply opposed the particular

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version of it that emerged from the "fast track." NAFTA, they argued, was misnamed. It was really NAFIA—the North American Free Investment Agreement, which would give corporations an expanded license to exploit Mexican workers without increasing their power to organize against such exploitation. Or perhaps NAUTA—the North American Unfair Trade Agreement, which would enhance the ability of corporations to whipsaw workers in the United States, threatening them with layoffs and plant closures unless they agreed to further concessions, without providing any guarantees that those who benefited from such concessions would be held responsible for the costs inflicted by them. The slogan of the AFL-CIO expressed the prevailing sentiment: "Not this NAFTA!"

In my opinion, there were three problems with this approach. First, it ignored the limitations of trade policy as a vehicle either for raising labor standards in other countries or for protecting them in this country. Second, it confused the problem of how to raise labor standards in other countries and how to protect them in this country with the problem of how to control corporate investment and make it "politically accountable" and "socially responsible." And, finally, it gave aid and comfort to those who prefer that the United States adopt a posture of defensive nationalism rather than of tolerant internationalism.

There isn't space here to deal with these objections in great detail. Each, however, deserves a bit more comment.

Trade policy is an important tool in the effort to raise international labor standards, but it is not the most important tool for that end. Restoring to workers and their organizations the power to police labor standards themselves, both domestically and internationally—by repealing the prohibitions against recognitional picketing, "hot cargo" agreements, subcontract clauses, secondary boycotts, sympathy strikes, and other instruments of labor solidarity—would do more to advance the struggle than any other single action.* Labor may well have missed a historic opportunity to give up its opposition to NAFTA in return for support from the Clinton administration for meaningful labor-law reform—by which I mean reform that would give to labor the power to organize itself and to act on its own behalf. But it may still be possible to channel some of the rank-and-file outrage unleashed by the debate over NAFTA into a campaign that calls for such changes. To succeed, of course, the campaign would have to go beyond simply lobbying Congress. An outraged rank and file will want to do more than simply write their representatives, and galvanizing them will probably require a little strategic civil disobedience—which under the terms of the old social contract labor agreed to shun. The need, however, is great. And the issues at stake are every bit as compelling as those that inspired both the abolitionists of the nineteenth century and the civil rights protests of the twentieth. Indeed, the central issue of labor-law reform is a direct extension of the animating themes of those movements—namely, whether an employment system ought to be based upon the notion that a person or persons can have a property right in another. If a line is to be drawn in the sand, that is where it should be drawn.

Second, there is the problem of investment. Some of NAFTA's opponents argued that corporate investment should be permitted in Mexico only if workers there were paid and treated the same as they are in the United States. Some proposed a "social tariff" to help encourage such linkages. This argument ignores the historical fact that increased wages and improved working conditions are an effect and not a cause of increased investment. If we are to help Mexican workers raise their wages and improve their working conditions we have to encourage *more* investment in Mexico. Nothing else will work. From that perspective, NAFTA should do more to help than to hurt the

* For a longer discussion of the importance of such changes from a slightly different angle, see Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Making Post-Industrial Unionism Possible" (U.S. Women's Bureau, 1994).

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cause, at least over the long run. Of course, doing so without also simultaneously making it possible for Mexican workers—and workers in the United States—to organize themselves will delay the desired effects. And doing so without providing for those who lose out in the restructuring process—for example, by expanding the movement for a "Superfund for Workers" modeled on the GI Bill of Rights passed after World War II, would impose onerous cuts on those who can least afford it. But these reservations only make the kind of a crusade I called for above all the more important.

Some NAFTA opponents also argued that at stake in the debate was the principle of whether or not society had a right to regulate the profit motive. It seems to me, however, that this argument mistook a possible means (government regulation) for an end (raising wages and giving workers everywhere meaningful control over their working conditions). Government regulation is not the only way to raise wages and control work. Just as capital benefits when labor competes with itself, labor benefits when capital competes with itself. Government regulation has always functioned more effectively to take profits, and not wages, "out of competition"—which is not all that surprising when you think about the balance of power between capital and labor. A "free investment regime" has the opposite effect, however, and in this respect, again, NAFTA, at least in the long run, may have done more to help labor's cause—especially in Mexico but also in the United States and Canada—than to hurt it.

Lastly, there is the question of the kind of political movement to which opposition to NAFTA has given rise. The readers of this journal were no doubt dismayed to see Ross Perot successfully install himself as the leader of the crusade against NAFTA. And they also no doubt hope that the debate with Al Gore quieted the "giant sucking sound of the South," at least for a while. But it is worth reflecting on the fact that the other opponents of NAFTA—such as the labor, environmental, and consumer movements—were not able to do the silencing themselves. Indeed, they all came perilously close to being Perot's water carriers, and the Texan continues to enjoy considerable support among rank-and-file workers disenchanted with politics as usual. In such circumstances, the movement for reform could easily take a nasty turn to the right, with potentially disastrous results. I don't mean to be a doomsayer, but I do think there is cause for concern. We need to find something other than nationalistic trade policies to mobilize the rank and file. A new abolitionism, anyone? □

Richard Rothstein

STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

The anti-NAFTA coalition saw the battle as a prelude to future mobilization against more serious international threats to American workers' living standards. But if there is to be any such mobilization, NAFTA opponents will have to move from simply opposing new trade initiatives to the more difficult work of shaping them to benefit working people.

After NAFTA, opportunities to do this continue to present themselves. One opportunity—provoked by the Russian elections in December—has already slipped by. Another—which may unfold at GATT's (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) April meeting—now looms.

What did the Russian elections have to do with American workers' living standards? The vote at first stimulated controversy about the

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downward economic spiral that has been accelerated by a strategy of asking developing nations to lower wages and living standards in order to attract international capital. But American conservatives, without interference from the anti-NAFTA coalition, squelched the debate.

In December, it seemed that "shock therapy"—privatizing state-owned enterprises while reducing consumer and industrial subsidies—had caused such suffering that Russians voted in frighteningly large numbers for the neofascist demagogue Vladimir Zhirinovsky. "Less shock and more therapy," counseled special ambassador (now Deputy Secretary of State) Strobe Talbott. We've been too "slow to recognize the hardship" caused by IMF (International Monetary Fund) programs, said Vice-President Al Gore. But Zhirinovsky did less well than initially feared, and American conservatives counterattacked, with Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen publicly chastising Talbott and Gore for urging less free-market pressure. Talbott had to recant, while Gore dropped the subject.

The dispute's implications go beyond Russia. IMF Russian policies are like those it follows in Mexico, Argentina, Poland, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. But when Gore's call for reconsideration was ignored, no congressional liberals or labor leaders stepped forward in Gore's defense. None in the anti-NAFTA coalition saw debate about the IMF's role as an opportunity to affect international economic strategies; none apparently saw that the policies that Gore, perhaps impetuously, condemned, are the very policies that forced Mexican President Salinas to reduce wages to make his nation hospitable to international capitalist development.

IMF-sponsored reforms are meant to safeguard Russia for investment by "stabilizing" the ruble—giving Western firms assurances that they can convert profits to dollars. So the IMF preaches: to preserve the ruble's value, make it scarce. Print fewer rubles, requiring state-owned factories to cover expenses without subsidies. Fire excess workers, reduce employment-based benefits, and raise consumer prices to the full cost of products sold.

Together with stabilization, the IMF seeks to create investment opportunities with "structural adjustment"—privatization of public enterprises, often resulting in widespread layoffs and salary cuts.

To date, Russia's free-market reformers have had little parliamentary support; few factory subsidies have actually been cut. But the specter of joblessness haunts millions. Consumer goods are available, yet few Russians can afford them as prices rise. To offset price hikes, subsidized enterprises raise workers' wages, but this cycle maintains 300 percent inflation, the ruble loses value, and Western advisers press for more extreme reform.

Unfortunately, advocates of a radical version of laissez-faire capitalism share a blithe ignorance of political requirements for stable democracy—a secure middle class with an unshakable stake in the system.

In Latin America, the IMF also promotes privatization of state enterprises and withdrawal of subsidies to stabilize the currency. From the NAFTA debate, Americans are familiar with the effects in Mexico. But Mexico has company. Venezuela, for example, initiated "stabilization" programs in 1989 when its poverty rate was 14 percent. Today, Venezuelan poverty is at 39 percent, and worker unrest accelerates.

Argentina has boosted tax collections, slashed inflation (from 5,000 percent in 1989 to 7.5 percent in 1993) and implemented the world's most thorough privatization program. The IMF considers Argentina, the fastest growing Latin American nation, a model. But two months ago, in an Argentine province where unemployment or underemployment is 40 percent, four thousand rioters burned government buildings. Last summer, citizens in Buenos Aires rioted because newly privatized utilities blocked electricity for residents who couldn't pay bills. Since IMF-approved programs began in 1991, Argentina's real consumer prices have jumped nearly 50 percent, while industrial wages have fallen.

Similar events unfold in Eastern Europe. Poland is the IMF's proudest achievement, but after both unemployment and extreme entrepreneurial wealth grew, former communists defeated the IMF-backed government in Septem-

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ber's elections. The same happened in Lithuania and is likely soon in Hungary.

Chile, however, now pioneers a different path of free-market reforms, with tax increases on the wealthy to pay for social programs. Since 1990, Chile has increased its minimum wage by 36 percent. Western economists argued this would make labor too expensive and create unemployment. But unemployment fell from 25 to 5 percent, and living standards of the poor rose. In contrast to Russia and Eastern Europe, Chile recently elected a liberal democratic president. Eduardo Frei pledged that antipoverty programs would be an ongoing priority. "You cannot have a country experiencing such economic vitality and growth and at the same time have three to four million poor," Frei said.

It's too bad the Zhirinovsky scare ended, because the initial instinct—to reconsider development strategies—was correct. Chile cannot be a mechanical model for other nations, but its experience suggests alternatives to conventional IMF wisdom. The voices of Al Gore and Strobe Talbott should not have been stifled so quickly. Those who should have come to their support, the anti-NAFTA coalition, remained silent, though Bentsen's rescue of the IMF will potentially harm American workers more than NAFTA ever could.

A New GATT Round?

There is now another chance to influence international development policy. Shortly before President Clinton's January trip to Europe, European Union President Jacques Delors proposed restricting imports from countries without adequate labor or environmental standards. Defending this initiative, French (conservative) Prime Minister Edouard Balladur asked, "What is the market? It is the law of the jungle, the law of nature. And what is civilization? It is the struggle against nature." Mickey Kantor then told his European Union counterpart, Sir Leon Brittan, that new trade talks were now needed on international labor rights and environmental standards.

At a press conference in Brussels the following day, Clinton added,

> President Delors and I share a lot of common ideas. . . . If you look at the vote in Russia, if you look at the recent vote in Poland, you see what happens in democracies when middle-class people feel that the future will be worse than the present . . . [I]f we're going to open our borders and trade more and invest more with developing nations, we want to know that their working people will receive some of the benefits and a fair share of the benefits of this trade and investment. Otherwise, they won't have increasing incomes and they won't be able to buy our products and services. So I see this whole worker rights issue as more a function of the global economy and one that will help us to build up ordinary citizens everywhere. . . ."

The next week, Sir Leon criticized the Kantor-Clinton proposals as "a disguised form of protectionism, merely fashionable and politically correct." International worker rights negotiations, if they ever get off the ground, will have no easy sailing.

If the anti-NAFTA fight was merely prelude to a lengthier struggle, the opportunity to continue has now arrived. In April, the first meeting of the World Trade Organization, established by the Uruguay Round, takes place in Marrakesh, Morocco. It will be the first, but not the last opportunity for Delors, Balladur, and Kantor to pursue their agenda of international worker rights and standards that will level up, not level down. But they can't do it without political backing, both for their goals and for the compromises that are inevitable. Clinton needs a combination of pressure and encouragement from worker rights' advocates. The anti-NAFTA coalition now has the opportunity to move from opposition to critical and perhaps constructive support. □

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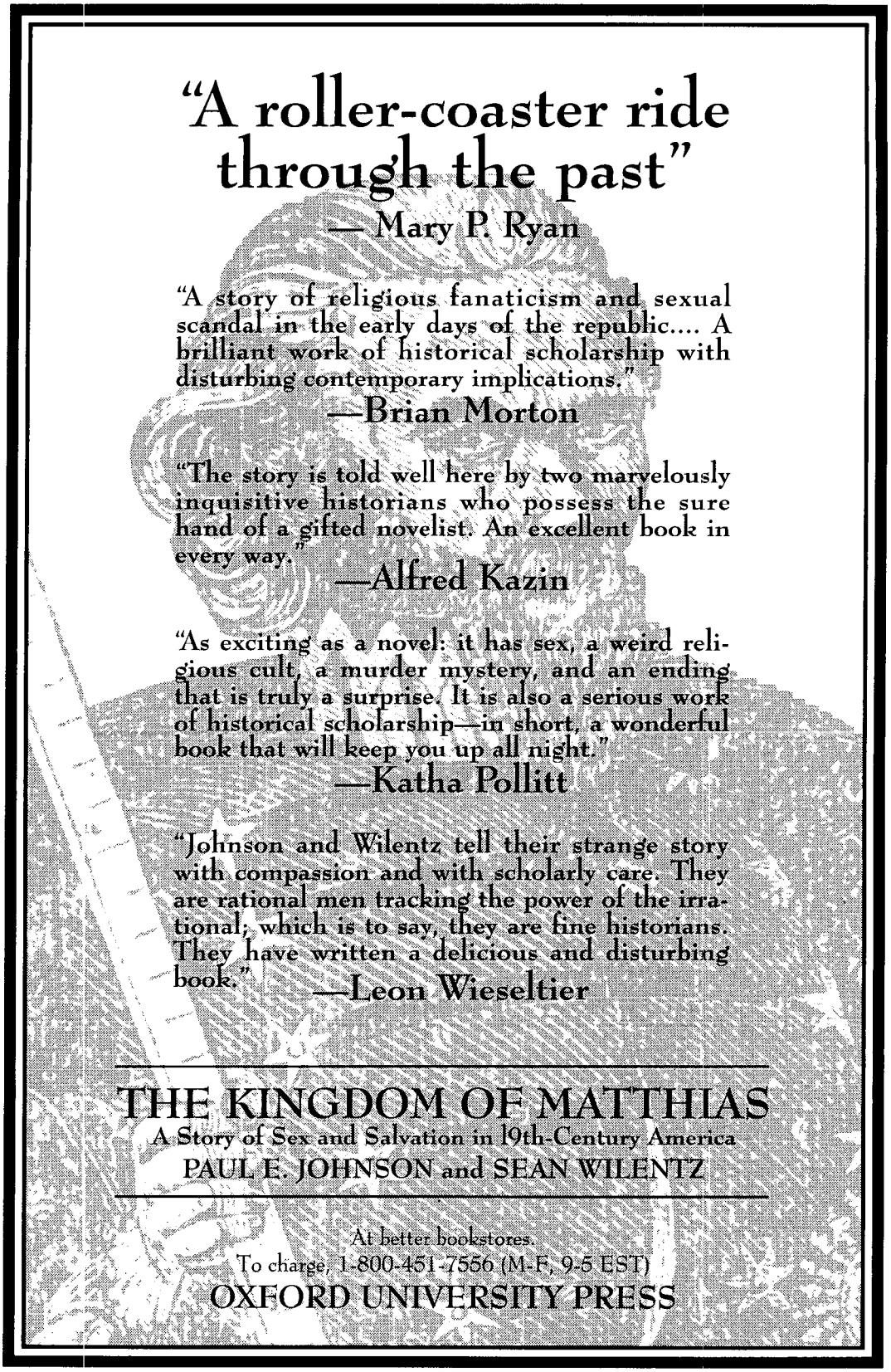

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Jean Bethke Elshtain

SINGLE MOTHERHOOD

Response to Iris Marion Young

What I found most surprising in Iris Young's analysis ("Making Single Motherhood Normal," Winter 1994) is the radical disconnection between her policy proposals and the constraints and possibilities of our current situation. She calls for "massive increases in state support for child care" when state budgets are strapped, cutbacks are being ordered across the board, and new initiatives in health care will gobble up whatever additional revenues are available. (Presumably she supports universal health care and favors moves in that direction.) She calls for "public policy" to dispel any notion of "normality" in family structure. But, surely, we have already conducted that experiment and it has failed. It has failed for the very people it was designed to help—single mothers and their children. I will offer up evidence on this score—evidence Young systematically overlooks.

She calls for states to "force men" to "pay child support for children they have recognized as theirs." She claims men shouldn't be let off the hook where their responsibilities are concerned. But her formulation continues to put the onus for child-rearing and child "recognition," if you will, on women. In fact, startlingly, her argument is a call for a return to a particularly rigid form of "separate spheres," something I thought feminists had a strong stake in criticizing and reforming. Once again we are in a world of "women and children only," where a woman can do it all by herself, thank you. A man could easily bypass Young's requirement by refusing to recognize a child as "his." Who is to compel this recognition if the institutional framework within which it has taken place historically—the two-parent family—has been entirely dismantled as a "norm" or "ideal" of any sort? There are no "fathers" or "daddies" in Young's universe with direct, daily responsibility for child care and family sustenance, something not reducible to a paycheck. Still, Young would "encourage" men to "involve themselves in close relationships with children, not necessarily their biological offspring." How? Why? What institutional forms will nurture and sustain such relationships? Are we to see forlorn bands of disconnected men roaming neighborhoods, knocking on doors, and asking if there is a baby inside they can "bond" with for a few hours? Young's rhetorical demolition of what she takes to be onerous tradition combined with her wholly abstract, vague pleas for connection and responsibility shows us again that politics of denunciation and sentimentalism that undermined much of 1960s radicalism. (I know: I was there.)

Let's enter the real world. For Young misses altogether what is at stake in the travail of the present moment. She reverts to the claim that "poverty" is the cause of all other troubles. This is curious because Young thrashes reductionism before rapidly moving to her own reductionist formula, namely, that any "sensible look" at the plight of poor families reveals that "poverty" is the cause of, well, being poor. Here she reproduces the very "one-way" causal claims she attacked just a few sentences earlier. The problem, of course, is that matters are far more complex than this. The mountain of evidence now available from reputable scholars tells us that cultural changes—alterations in norms and values—are not mere epiphenomenal foam on the causal sea but are themselves vectors of economic trouble. We know that poverty is associated with single parents. This means mothers, often very young

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mothers (those "babies having babies" Jesse Jackson talks about) in a father-absent situation. We also know, from the National Commission on Children, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and dozens of other reliable sources that children growing up in single-parent households are at greater risk on every index of well-being (crime, violence, substance abuse, mental illness, dropping out of school, and so on).

But mark this: there is no compelling evidence that a decline in government spending accounts for the past several decades' burgeoning litany of risks to children. Economists Victor Fuchs and Diane Reklis have shown that the well-being of children worsened in a period when "purchases of goods and services for children by government rose very rapidly, as did real household income per child, and the poverty rate of children plummeted. Thus, we must seek explanations for the rising problems of that period in the cultural realm." The period to which Fuchs and Reklis refer is the 1960–1970 decade. If you continue to track direct government expenditures per child up to the present moment you find no compelling correlation between government support and child well-being per se. Indeed, we are spending more for children today in the public sphere than ever before. The sad truth is that our public investment in children is being outstripped by "private disinvestment," in other words, the breakup of the two-parent home. If you control for all other factors, *including* economic status, you learn that father absence is the single most important risk factor for children, whether one is talking about poor health or poverty or behavioral problems (the latter being a euphemistic way of gesturing toward drug addiction, being the victim or perpetrator of violence, adolescent out-of-wedlock birth, and so on). Do we change all of this by making a one-parent family suddenly "normal"? That won't stop children from suffering. That won't help a child find security and trust and safety. Of course, we should do our best for all children. But that means doing our best to create situations that do best for children, not continuing to try to patch things up when we *know*, because the evidence is in, that some familial arrangements are better for children than others.

The *Kids Count Data Book*, published by the liberal Center for the Study of Social Policy, one of the most widely accepted scholarly sources in this area, offers up annual "Profiles of Child Well-Being." The most recent profile included the following startling information. Researchers looked at two groups and compared them: couples who completed high school, married, and waited until age twenty to have their first child against couples who did none of the above—they neither married nor finished school, and in which the girl gave birth before age twenty. In the first group, the number of children who fell below the poverty line was 8 percent. In the second group, the number of children who fell below the poverty line was a startling 79 percent. What this suggests is that marriage, somewhat delayed child-bearing, and high school completion—cultural and educational factors—fuel economic outcomes. It is high time we set aside economic reductionism of the sort Young oddly endorses and looked to the dissolution of the fabric of families and communities, a tragedy entangled with the repudiation of those "norms" for male and female responsibility for children that Young finds oppressive because they "stigmatize" single mothers. The stigma attached to single motherhood has virtually disappeared, if we trust the survey data, but the problems associated with the children of single parents do not go away so readily.

If we are to see investment "in the ghettos," the building of new houses and schools, the creation of "millions of decent jobs," no less, we need people capable of holding jobs; we need secure social institutions; we need children who are compelled by parents to stay in school; we need all the things Young blithely ignores. The most successful organizing for change over the past fifty years has come from poor and working-class communities who form broad-based coalitions to work for housing, jobs, schools, in the most devastated urban areas—from Brownsville to San Antonio. I

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have in mind, for example, the activities of the Industrial Areas Foundation. If Young wants to see revitalization of communities in action she should check out the work of the East Brooklyn Congregations (EBC) and their Nehemiah Homes project or Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), a group that has made significant strides in school reform in the inner city. There are dozens and dozens of such examples. The organizing base is families and churches—the remnants of intact institutions—for you cannot make lasting, meaningful change of any kind outside institutions.

Civic philosophy dies when academics, in the name of radicalism, in the name, heaven help us, of that democratic socialism for which this journal has traditionally stood, endorse values that erode the only possible bases for creating and sustaining community institutions over time—calling for more individualism (hence Young's celebration of an individual woman's "choice" to have a baby whether she is thirteen years old or fifty, as if that choice and not any consideration of the child's well-being were the only value at stake); more vast government projects, hence more clientage; normlessness as a norm; and on and on. It is depressing to see these old nostrums refurbished as radical or reformist when they could scarcely be more conformist—to the naively anti-institutionalist, hyper-individualist tendencies of our time, with a heavy dollop of "separate spheres with a feminist face" thrown in for good measure.

Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Fully achieved, Iris Young's proposals would be a disaster for women and children, probably for men too, and certainly for liberal and left politics.

She is wrong on three points, at least: single mothers are *not* despised; liberals don't view single mothers as the sole source of our social ills; liberalism has *not* abandoned its heritage by rallying to the two-parent family.

If only *Time* magazine had made Marla Maples—an unwed mother—the woman of the year, we would fully realize that a mother's unwedded state is no bar to celebrity or social lionizing—and a kiss on the cheek from (former) Mayor David Dinkins. The press and television treat single motherhood as a variant of the American family. I suspect that teachers, principals, social workers, acquaintances, and neighbors don't ask and don't care. That changes when the individual choice of single motherhood becomes a collective responsibility. It is women who have children that they can't support or get fathers to support that exercise tax-paying Americans, at least some of whom are single-mother families themselves! Plain and simple, the problem is not single mothers but single mothers who depend on the rest of us to support them and their children.

The Reagan administration and accompanying pundits convinced the American electorate that the welfare system now functions as a dowry system for adolescent girls, who, becoming pregnant, are launched into motherhood and adulthood with food stamps, child support, housing allowances, and Medicaid long before they are ready to be good mothers. And it doesn't end there, the critics go on: rather than supporting people in need until they can get back on their feet, the system is failing children and undermining young men's sense of responsibility for their children. Conservatives think that welfare is hurting poor people. Among others, a lot of poor people agree with them.

This analysis has penetrated the thinking of Democrats and other liberals. Some speak of job training, of community service in return for welfare. Some speak of two-year limits; others of withholding aid for infants born when a woman is already on welfare; all stand behind that once unthinkable policy of dunning delinquent dads for court-ordered child support. Even Wisconsin, with its tradition of progressive politics, is bailing out of the federal welfare system in order to limit and control in its own expenditures.

Should these be counted traitors to the liberal cause?

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Those old enough to remember will recall that liberals created the welfare system to keep families together, to help tide over those in temporary trouble, and to help widows maintain a household. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and other welfare measures were never meant to support teenage moms or help their boyfriends elude the responsibilities of fatherhood; nor were they intended to make up for missing child-support payments. The system has been adapted to meet these needs on the assumption that women with children often have no other recourse. Often they do not. When, however, the system itself seems to encourage unwed motherhood or male abandonment and to contribute to family breakdown, reasonable people ask their politicians why. To their credit some liberals are reconsidering the merits of the two-parent family. Were two-parent families to come back into vogue, our social ills would not disappear. But there is reason to expect that children would have saner, more secure, and—boys especially—more disciplined upbringings. These would be a good in themselves.

Iris Young wants us to assume that "there is nothing morally wrong with single-mother families." What does she mean? Women of any age, educational attainment, income level, or marital status should be able to bear and raise a child. I agree. At least I agree that no one else—the state, the father, the woman's relatives—has a right to force a woman to get an abortion if she is pregnant. Or force her to use contraception. Or, barring abusive or seriously neglectful behavior, take her child from her. In that sense the mother-child relationship is sacrosanct; the right to conceive and bear a child is basic.

But not every exercise of a "right" adds up to a moral good. Nations have a right to protect their sovereignty; not every act in pursuit of that right is moral. Individuals in our society have a right to free speech; not every sentence uttered in exercising that right constitutes a moral good. The analogy applies to childbearing decisions: it may be a right, but that does not make it a moral good. Single motherhood—though not wrong in and of itself—can undermine the well-being of others.

First, there is the child and his or her need for care, comfort, and stability—constant attention as an infant and consistent attention as a child and adolescent. Even with two (or more) adults, this is an arduous undertaking spanning more than two decades. Can single-mother families really meet this responsibility? Many do; many others do not.

Then, consider alternative child-care support systems. There is the woman's own family, which may be her surest recourse. But what if this, too, is a single-mother family? or siblings need attention? or husband and wife both work? A single mother's need may be great, but families have limits. Other child-caring facilities—day-care centers, schools, camps—are available, but they may be overwhelmed with the needs of materially and emotionally deprived children. Young believes more money and more personnel are the answer. But can a single mother (or father) act on the assumption that they are? And from where do these additional and abundant new resources come?

This brings us to the question of the common good and the implicit social contract on which it rests. Young refers to the "state" and the "welfare state" as if these were entities capable of delivering goods and services at will. The United States is a democracy that eventually comes to reflect—if only imperfectly—the views of its citizens. Underlying at least some of the critical views of welfare—which Young thinks stingy—is a sense of quid pro quo: Social responsibility ought to encourage individual responsibility, not undermine or replace it. Is that unreasonable? The reservoirs of social responsibility that Young wants to draw upon will be swiftly depleted in a society whose citizens, women and men alike, do not habitually feel and exercise responsibility for themselves and their families.

Our social experiment in single motherhood over the last twenty-five years is failing great numbers of women and children while corroding the bonds that tie men to familial responsibilities. In the name of reform, we should not take from them the admittedly meager resources provided by the current

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system. But neither can opinion makers, academics, or intellectual elites, feminist and otherwise, go on arguing that this situation is normal, and will be made even "more normal" by increased welfare payments and better support systems.

The communitarians have a slogan that we might all take to heart: strong rights entail strong responsibilities—that goes for the right to bear and raise children.

Iris Marion Young Replies:

Jean Elshtain and Margaret Steinfels and I agree at least on one thing: too many children are poor, badly educated, at risk of being un- or underemployed, becoming substance dependent, criminal, or dead. What we disagree on are the solutions to these problems. Indeed, for all their strong language, I find neither offering any action. Calls for "secure institutions," restoring the "fabric of families," and living up to "strong responsibilities" are empty exhortations unless we specify just who should take responsibility to do what. The form of the rhetoric, moreover, leaves the impression that it's "they" and not "we" who have shirked responsibilities. This vague rhetoric seems to function as an excuse not only for doing nothing, but for not even thinking about what to do.

Elshtain and Steinfels both claim that "we" have undertaken a "social experiment" in single motherhood that has "failed." What odd phrasing! Who are "we" who designed such a cruel "experiment"? But, of course, no one designed the patchwork of plural family living arrangements in the United States today. In some respects, it has always been with us. There is no question, however, that the last two decades have seen more divorce and less marriage, though the rate of teenage pregnancy has not in fact increased.

What do Elshtain and Steinfels propose that we do about the lives of children? We should, in the words of Elshtain, "create situations that do best for children," that is, promote intact two-parent families. But how shall we do that? It is hard to believe that Elshtain and Steinfels would forbid divorce. Perhaps they favor making divorce more difficult, as some recommend, with a waiting period. This assumes that couples now rush into divorce without thinking, which is for the most part not so. Since divorce in the United States is already painful and costly, especially when there are children, making divorce more difficult is not likely to reduce appreciably the number of divorces.

And what shall we do about women who give birth without being married? Again, Elshtain and Steinfels would not force abortions, and I suspect that they would not force men to marry and live with the women they have impregnated. Would they recommend punishing women who give birth out of wedlock as a deterrent to others, or punishing fathers who do not marry them? This alternative is frighteningly close to the minds of some people in the current debate, but it doesn't sound like Elshtain or Steinfels. Perhaps the carrot is a better idea: cash awards and medals for couples who get and stay married.

The most that Elshtain's and Steinfels's calls for restoration of family values and responsibilities can mean practically is that public discussion promote the idea that intact two-parent families are better than other families; churches, schools, community groups, perhaps occasional television ad campaigns should send out this message. If such a society-wide educational campaign were implemented, it might indeed have some measurable impact on marriage and divorce rates, but I submit not very much. Thus I find Elshtain and Steinfels recommending virtually no social action to improve the lives of children.

Their insistence that although women have a "right" to parent alone, their family lives are less valuable, moreover, is an affront to the worth and dignity of women who have tried marriage and found it wanting, are out on their own with their children, and are not interested in a new husband. Is a liberal society really to condemn these women, and if it does can it claim it is respecting them as equal citizens?

With the communitarian refrain, "strong rights entail strong responsibilities," Steinfels

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suggests that it's about time the parents of those children did something, instead of sitting around waiting for handouts from the state. Elshtain, too, suggests a kind of quid pro quo: if we are to see investment in dilapidated neighborhoods, building of new schools and houses, we need secure social institutions and children who are compelled by their parents to stay in school. Once parents get off their duffs and build these institutions and discipline their children, then maybe we can talk about social support.

Are Elshtain and Steinfels really suggesting that single mothers (not all of whom are poor) or poor people (not all of whom are in families with one parent) are, as a group, more irresponsible than other people? When middle-class, married couples refuse to support the local school system through a tax increase, complain about the quality of the schools, and enroll their kids in private school, are they behaving responsibly? When bank executives refuse to make loans to homeowners and businesses in poor neighborhoods and invest instead in risky tourism ventures on the other side of the country, are they behaving responsibly? I submit that irresponsibility is randomly distributed across race, class, gender, and family form, and I agree that there is far too much of it. But I also submit that most people most of the time are trying to meet their responsibilities to their families, friends, and coworkers. Less often, perhaps, do people think about and meet their responsibilities to distant strangers, but here responsibility increases with social privilege. We live in a time of a "responsibility deficit," some say, but I don't know the measure of responsibility levels. If the measure for single mothers is the income level of their children and the state of the schools, health clinics, and parks in the neighborhoods where they live, then this is a most unforgivable example of blaming the victims.

I completely agree with Elshtain that a vigorous and just society depends on the active participation of citizens in civic institutions of their own making, either not connected or only loosely connected to the state—neighborhood cleanup crews, parent councils in schools, volunteer social services, community arts and culture centers, cooperatives, political advocacy organizations. Despite communitarian complaints, I find no evidence that this sort of volunteer community organizing and service provision has waned in the United States in the last two decades. The heroic activities of organizations like the Industrial Areas Foundation or the Cabrini Green Tenants Association, which Elshtain applauds, are very often led by single mothers. Other such volunteer civic activities are led by the "forlorn bands of disconnected men" Elshtain imagines "roaming neighborhoods." Many men run athletic and cultural programs for children, or volunteer in tutoring centers, drug-prevention, and skills-building workshops. Despite what I regard as a healthy level of civic activity in the United States among people of both genders and all races and classes, there is certainly need for more. Public expenditures on street lighting and better transportation, along with private corporate decisions to reduce working hours without reducing pay, might enable more people to engage in more self-defined civic activities to improve their lives and their neighborhoods.

It is Elshtain and Steinfels who have their heads in the sand if they think that "private disinvestment" in the two-parent family has destroyed our schools and taken jobs away from the neighborhoods. American society has been severely damaged by three decades of private and public disinvestment in basic manufacturing, new and rehabilitated housing, bridges and rail lines, public education, adult retraining, and social services such as preventive health care and libraries. Volunteers can only barely begin to fill these gaping holes in the American dream.

Elshtain and Steinfels write as though I have called for more of the same tired old welfare policies in order to respond to the stresses of single motherhood and the economic disadvantage many children suffer. But my policy principles call for social *investment* (this word that Elshtain seems to find so hyperbolic), not draining handouts. Private industry should bear as much responsibility for this investment, moreover, as government does. Elshtain suggests that a condition for the creation of decent

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jobs is that children be motivated to stay in school. Only a little reflection should suggest that precisely the reverse is true. She accuses me of resuscitating a separate spheres ideology that would keep women at home caring for children, yet scoffs at my call for the massive increases in state support for child care that would enable more mothers—and fathers—to work outside the home and volunteer, knowing that their children were cared for. Steinfels suggests that parents cannot assume that more money and personnel will make quality child care more available and affordable. I do not understand why we cannot assume that it would help a great deal.

Neither Elshtain nor Steinfels mentions the single most important cause of the economic disadvantage in which children of many single mothers live: low wages for women's work. Coupled with the scarcity or expense of child care, low wages make it rational for many women to stay on welfare. Millions of single mothers nevertheless take jobs that enable them and their children only barely to escape poverty, if that. We do not have to accept as given the sex segregation of women's work that helps keep those wages low. It is simple sexism to decide that the only way to pull the children of single mothers out of poverty is to get them live-in fathers; it is also an unrealistic expectation, since male unemployment rates have been steadily rising in the last decade, and male wage rates have been falling. Public and private programs should be devoted to training women for higher wage jobs and raising the wages of traditionally female jobs. This is not a wasteful handout; it is justice.

Decent schools, housing, infrastructure, decent jobs for all able to work, wage equalization, and affordable child care can come about only through significant levels of public spending combined with both coerced and voluntary efforts of private capital. Elshtain and Steinfels throw up their hands at the absurdity of such a statement in these days "when state budgets are strapped, cutbacks are being ordered across the board." Are these facts of nature? If caring progressives treat them as such, then we are certainly doomed. Americans must engage in a serious and prolonged discussion of public and private spending and taxation, with the aim of shifting resources from waste and quick profits to investment in people and neighborhoods.

Topping the agenda for such discussion must be the fat public larder where we still see very little in the way of cutbacks: military spending. According to the Center for Defense Information, Clinton's 1994 budget contains $340 billion in military spending, only $10 billion lower than Bush's 1993 budget. Compare this to $54 billion for education and social services, or $11 billion for community and regional development. In his State of the Union Address, Clinton vowed not to cut another dime from military spending. Surely this is madness. I wouldn't say that we should leave ourselves defenseless, or even unable to fight one imperialist war at a time; let's just take *half* of that $340 billion over the next five years and rechannel it into job-creating schools, day-care centers, new houses and apartments, steel, clean trains, parks, libraries, bridges and roads, and, yes, community organizing clearinghouses. □

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Dennis Wrong

PR On PC

The Fall 1993 issue of *Partisan Review* was entirely filled by a symposium on "The Politics of Political Correctness" to which twenty-seven people, most of them professors, contributed. Unlike several famous earlier *PR* symposia, this one can hardly be said to take up either a timely or a neglected topic. Nor is there any novelty in the universally critical attitude toward their subject of the symposiasts, none of whom defends political correctness even as a well-intentioned enterprise gone wrong.

Three years have passed since the "politically correct" (PC) label came into general use to describe efforts on college campuses to promote or impose approved speech codes for referring to groups victimized by past discrimination and, more broadly, to describe the mechanically applied egalitarian principles justifying these efforts. Just about every major newspaper and magazine in the country has run lead articles criticizing political correctness, denouncing it as "thought control" in violation of the First Amendment, or at the very least ridiculing its silly linguistic puritanism. The latter theme has become a staple of the funny papers (including the liberal "Doonesbury" strip), usually involving the concoction of ingeniously ludicrous equivalents for other groups of euphemisms comparable to "vertically challenged" for short people. A newspaper columnist making humorous predictions for the New Year wrote that "every article about political correctness on campus will include the phrase 'a Hebrew colloquialism literally translated as "water buffalo".' " One in four of the *PR* symposiasts lives up to this prediction by alluding to the farcical incident at the University of Pennsylvania to which it refers.

All precincts, in short, have been heard from and for some time now. This includes *PR* itself, which two years ago devoted a whole issue to the proceedings of a conference it had organized on "The Changing Culture of the University" in which twelve of the current symposiasts participated, advancing arguments not notably different from theirs in the present issue. Three contributions, including two of the longest, were previously published elsewhere, and quite a few of the contributors have had their say in other easily accessible publications. Do we really need to hear yet again from Hilton Kramer and Roger Kimball, who fulminate every month against political correctness and its cognates in Kramer's the *New Criterion?*

"Dumbocracy in America," "The Politics of Separatism," "The Reign of Intolerance," "Self-Censorship," "Soft Totalitarianism," "False Gods," "McCarthyism of the Left," "The War on Standards," "The Crisis in Higher Education," "Anti-Rationalism"—all of these self-explanatory titles heading the individual contributions have become virtual clichés in the crusade against political correctness. The assault, moreover, is continuous with earlier attacks on left conformism in the universities that were given wide currency by conservatives during the Reagan and Bush administrations. The target has been damaged to the point where those identified with political correctness have themselves repudiated the label and been forced into a defensive posture. No one publicly defends the condemners of the "water buffalo" epithet, the list of approved euphemisms circulated at Smith College (which no one has been punished for ignoring), Leonard Jeffries's diatribes at the City University of New York or those of his fellow Afrocentrist at Wellesley College—all invoked yet again by many of the *PR* symposiasts.

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To his credit, one of the editors, Morris Dickstein, begins his contribution with the declaration, "This is rather late in the day for a symposium on political correctness." Another editor, Mark Lilla, enjoins, "Let this be the last symposium on the culture wars." Lilla summarizes European views of the debate that perceive political correctness as no more than the latest evidence of anti-intellectualism reflecting an enduring "profound tension," previously described by Richard Hofstadter, between "American democratic culture . . . [and] the life of the mind." Fred Siegel cites Hofstadter to the same effect.

Alan Wolfe argues that to a considerable extent political correctness has been imposed by university administrators schooled in new managerial techniques. Diane Ravitch provides a typically well-informed and intelligent account of antimeritocratic practices at the high school level. Most of the symposiasts concentrate on university liberal arts programs, especially on English departments—fully a third of them are professors or former professors of English. They fail to note that it is in fields of such dubious intellectual repute as communications, education, journalism, film studies, and, perhaps, as Wolfe suggests, business administration that "sensitivity training," multicultural pieties, and various new forms of groupthink have taken firmest root. The professor at the University of New Hampshire suspended because of a thoroughly questionable charge of sexual harassment (subsequently defended in *The Village Voice* and *The New York Review of Books*) was accused by several barely literate students in a class on "technical writing" in a two-year applied life sciences program. The distance from the fashionable French thinkers favored by poststructuralist literary theorists to such downmarket experiences of political correctness is considerable, although no doubt there has been a certain trickle effect.

In one of the two or three outstanding—though reprinted—symposium pieces, John Searle points out that poststructuralist relativism and residual Marxism are concentrated in literature departments and poorly represented in departments of philosophy and the social sciences (not at all, of course, in the physical sciences). This is even true of sociology, traditionally a field attractive to political activists; sociologists have in recent years elected such non- or anti-PC figures to the presidency of their academic association as James Coleman, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Amitai Etzioni. One has the impression that the most extravagant rhetoric denouncing PC as "liberal fascism" (Kramer quoting Paul Johnson) posing a threat to "the traditions of the West" (*PR*'s preamble to the symposium), "the autonomy of the modern university" (Brigitte Berger), "what is best and most lasting in our culture" (Kimball), "nothing less than the intellectual and political achievements of our democratic society" (Kramer), "irony and wit" (David Lehman), "the heritage of Western civilization" (William Phillips), "the integrity of our culture" (Ronald Radosh), comes from journalists and literateurs who, like the most prominent neoconservative publicists, are not very conversant with the structure and routines of the contemporary university.

Robert Alter, a professor of English at Berkeley and the author of a book critical of the new ideological modes of theorizing about literature, observes that even in English departments where Toni Morrison is thought to be more important than Shakespeare, the students respond more enthusiastically to the latter. Alter's reflections are wise and thoroughly knowledgeable about the current condition of the teaching of English, skeptical of the anecdotalism and extreme claims made by both sides in the PC debate, although unambiguously opposed to the ideologues of race, class, and gender.

Morris Dickstein insists that conservatives have created their own version of PC in demonizing "the Left"; he is pleased to witness the emergence of strong liberal critiques of PC from Searle, Frederick Crews, Irving Howe, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., David Bromwich, Todd Gitlin, C. Vann Woodward, John Highman, and Robert Hughes. Eugene Goodheart also identifies conservative equivalents of PC and adds Ravitch, Nat Hentoff, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Cornel West to the list of new voices transcending the frozen terms of a

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debate that has been going on for over a decade. Yet except for Searle and Ravitch none of these writers is represented in the symposium, while several well-known neoconservative polemicists are included who quickly seize the opportunity to link PC to the Clinton administration.

It may be that some liberal PC critics were asked to contribute and declined, perhaps because they did not like the company they thought they would be keeping in *PR*'s pages and did not relish being token voices. And not without reason.

The senior editor, William Phillips, and Ronald Radosh, a frequent recent writer in *PR* on political subjects, both make a point of criticizing anti-PC liberals. "As for a middle ground, it simply does not exist. One either supports the teaching of Western traditions and values, or dismisses them as the product of dead, white males," writes Phillips. He proceeds to fault Bromwich, Hughes, and Gates for rejecting the right-wing counterparts of PC. There is an abysmal failure here to distinguish between the adoption of a middle position between two extremes and the outright rejection of the terms in which the debate is posed by both sides. Yet Phillips and Radosh would surely be quick to deny that opposition to both the Stalinism to which Phillips predictably likens PC and the McCarthyism with which Radosh equates it involved splitting the difference between them.

Radosh, to be sure, may have some trouble recognizing such a distinction. Toward the end of a fitting memorial tribute to Irving Howe in the Summer 1993 *PR*, he criticized Howe and *Dissent* for, implicitly at least, supporting the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. He ignores the fact that Howe and many writers for *Dissent*, for example, my New York University colleague Juan Corradi, whom *Dissent* actually sent to Managua, clearly opposed *both* the Sandinistas and the Reagan administration's illegal sponsorship of the *contra* rebellion against them. Another *PR* symposiast, Mark Mirsky, grotesquely misconstrues Howe's silence in an informal conversation as tolerance for Leonard Jeffries's anti-Semitism. (But, then, Mirsky thinks that his friend Elizabeth Holtzman, of all people, was a victim of PC!)

Seven years ago, *PR* was publicly embarrassed when it cancelled a symposium on American foreign policy centered on an article by Michael Ledeen after he had been revealed as an important figure in the Iran-*contra* scandal. His article, eventually published in a neoconservative journal, read like a justification (before the facts became public) of the covert and illegal Reagan administration policies in Iran and Central America. Daniel Bell, Leon Wieseltier, Susan Sontag, and I ended our association with *Partisan Review* as a result of this episode. In the years since, the journal has increasingly resembled a quarterly supplement to the *New Criterion* and *Commentary*, combining features of both. In the light of *PR*'s illustrious past, it is sad to have to doubt whether this role really meets any urgent intellectual or political need. □

On Line with *Dissent*

Upon the advice of several librarians, we have decided to stop printing a biennial index in the pages of *Dissent*. *Dissent* is now indexed in *Academic Abstracts*, the Infotrak Academic Index, *Magazine Article Summaries*, the *PAIS Bulletin*, University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI), the *Social Sciences Index*, and the *Social Science Source*. Readers and librarians who wish to receive a copy of the index for Volumes 39 and 40 of *Dissent* (Winter 1992 through Fall 1993) can write to *Dissent*, 521 Fifth Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10017. Please include 52¢ postage.

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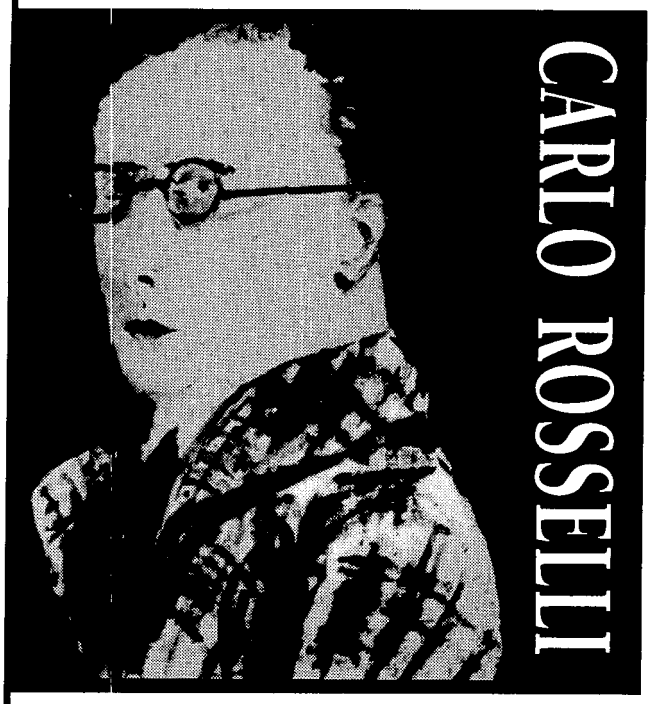
LIBERAL SOCIALISM



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Jon Wiener

JOHN LENNON AND THE FBI

The concept of the 'official secret' is the specific invention of bureaucracy," Max Weber wrote, "and nothing is so fanatically defended by the bureaucracy." Democratic politics requires a public informed about government decisions, policies, and actions; yet government officials everywhere typically "keep their knowledge and intentions secret," and thereby avoid criticism and hinder opposition. I ought to know; I've been in court for a decade, trying to get the FBI to release its secret files on John Lennon.

American democracy has not been powerless before the practice of government secrecy. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was passed by Congress in 1966; it requires officials to make public the information in their files to "any person" who requests it—unless that information falls into a small number of exempted categories, including "national security." The FOIA created a notable institution in the history of bureaucracy: a set of rules and procedures, officials and offices, dedicated not to the collection and maintenance of secrets, but rather to their release to the public. Journalists, scholars, and activists have used the FOIA to expose officials' misconduct and lying, including the FBI's illegal efforts to harass, intimidate, disrupt, and otherwise interfere with lawful political actions—like John Lennon's singing "Give Peace a Chance." But twelve years of Republican rule deeply eroded freedom of information. My fight for the Lennon files provides an illuminating case study.

Those files were gathered during the last days of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, in the winter of 1971 and the spring and summer of 1972, when the Vietnam War was going strong, Richard Nixon was facing reelection, and the "clever Beatle" was living in New York and singing "Give Peace a Chance" at antiwar rallies. In 1981 I filed a FOIA request for files on Lennon. The FBI released approximately two hundred pages, but withheld another hundred—largely under the claim that releasing them would endanger the national security of the United States.

"National security" has been defined by presidential Executive Order to cover information provided by foreign governments, and that seemingly reasonable definition has made for some remarkable arguments on the part of the FBI for refusing to disclose particular documents. The release of portions of the Lennon file, the FBI claimed, could "reasonably be expected" to lead to "foreign . . . military retaliation against the United States."

The FOIA permits requesters to appeal Bureau decisions to withhold material by going to federal court; the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit on my behalf in 1983, challenging this and other deletions. The FBI's position was explained in a court declaration by Special Agent Robert F. Peterson, supervisor of the National Security Affidavits Unit at FBI headquarters, who told the court he had been "designated by the Attorney General of the United States as an original Top Secret classification authority." Special Agent Peterson informed the court that release of the Lennon information could "jeopardize the fragile relationships that exist among the United States and certain foreign governments." The Lennon file, "if disclosed, could lead to political or economic instability, or to civil disorder or unrest" in the foreign country that supplied the information, or could "jeopardize the lives, liberty or property of United States citizens residing in or visiting

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such a country or could endanger United States Government personnel or installations there."

What could the Lennon FBI file contain that, if released, might have these dire consequences? The Nixon administration learned in 1971 that Lennon and some friends (Jerry Rubin and Rennie Davis) were talking about organizing a national concert tour to coincide with the 1972 election campaign, a tour that would combine rock music and radical politics, during which Lennon would urge young people to register to vote, and vote against the war. Senator Strom Thurmond sent a secret memo to Attorney General John Mitchell early in 1972 reporting on Lennon's plans, and suggesting that "deportation would be a strategic counter-measure." The Nixon administration promptly began deportation proceedings against Lennon. Lennon told the press that Nixon was after him and his wife, Yoko Ono, "because we're peaceniks."

This is the point at which "information gathered by the United States . . . from a foreign country" enters the story. The Nixon administration claimed that Lennon should be deported because his 1969 conviction on misdemeanor charges of marijuana possession in Britain made him inadmissible to the United States under then-existing immigration law. Presumably the FBI's Lennon file contains information from the British government regarding that event. Canada is another country that almost certainly provided the FBI with information about Lennon: when Lennon was temporarily banned from entering the United States in 1968, he went to Montreal to do a series of antiwar broadcasts and interviews addressed to young people in the United States.

What had happened with my FOIA request was clear: an original classification officer, working all day, every day, with a thick magic marker, blacked out material in the Lennon file that originated with the British and Canadian governments; he marked the blacked-out passages with the code referring to "information concerning the foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States"; the Justice Department submitted to the court the codebook it uses in all FOIA litigation, which provides boilerplate arguments for each category of deletion. One codebook section described "damage to the national security reasonably expected to result from unauthorized disclosure," and among the list of possible damages the FBI codebook included "foreign military retaliation against the U.S."

However unlikely that seemed, the courts had accepted similar claims in other cases. A 1982 decision of the D.C. Circuit, affirmed by the Supreme Court in 1983 (*American Jewish Congress v. Treasury Department*), held that "even speculative or ambiguous prediction of harm to foreign relations through release of information provided by foreign governments is sufficiently reasonable and plausible to warrant deference to opinion of agency experts." Max Weber would have understood the argument well: there's no opinion more valuable than an expert opinion.

On a dark day for the FOIA, the federal district court in Los Angeles accepted the government's arguments and threw our case out. The ACLU appealed to the Ninth Circuit. My initial FOIA request had been submitted in 1981; ten years later, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a unanimous ruling: the FBI's claim of foreign military retaliation was "farfetched." (It's hard to disagree with that, but couldn't they have come to the same conclusion after only two or three years of work on the case?) The Bureau had failed to justify withholding documents in the Lennon file.

The Ninth Circuit decision was significant because it held not just that release of the Lennon file was unlikely to provoke anti-American riots in Britain, but that the FBI's codebook approach was itself unacceptable. The codebook approach, the Ninth Circuit declared, provided the requester with "little or no opportunity to argue for release of particular documents," because it "provided no information about particular documents." That's what we thought. But instead of ordering the FBI to give us the documents, the Ninth Circuit Panel instructed the FBI to go back to U.S. District Court and give the judge a specific explanation of how it determined in each instance that release of information would harm national security.

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That was a tough assignment for the clerks who have been designated by the attorney general as original Top Secret classification authorities. Instead of complying with the Ninth Circuit ruling, the FBI appealed to the Supreme Court. The Bush Justice Department told the Court that the ruling posed "a serious risk of unlawful disclosures" and placed "an intolerable burden on the government"—that is, it was intolerably burdensome to require the FBI to explain how it arrived at its conclusions about national security.

The Supreme Court in its wisdom denied the FBI's request to hear the case. All the Nixon, Reagan, and Bush appointees to the court sided with the ACLU; the lone vote supporting the Bush Justice Department was Kennedy holdover Byron "Whizzer" White. My grandmother would have commented, "Go figure."

Then Bill Clinton was elected and Janet Reno appointed, and the FOIA community, as we like to call ourselves, dared to hope that freedom of information policy might change. In October, Attorney General Janet Reno declared a new policy: henceforth, the Justice Department would go to court to defend the withholding of information only when there was a "reasonable basis" for doing so. This statement represented a clear and bold advance over the policy declared in 1981 by the Reagan administration, under which the government went to court to fight FOIA cases whenever it found a "legal basis" for doing so. The discovery of this difference between a "legal basis" and a "reasonable" one gives us hope that the case of *Wiener v. FBI* might finally be coming to an end. □

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John Mollenkopf

BEYOND POLITICS IN BLACK AND WHITE

On November 2, 1993, Rudolph Giuliani defeated David Dinkins to become New York City's third Republican mayor in this century. Although the 1993 election closely paralleled the 1989 race between the two, small shifts in turnout and preference produced a large difference in the outcome. Disappointingly low turnout among African-American voters and a decline in support among other groups defeated Dinkins, the city's first African-American mayor, after only one term. Dinkins did not lose the election only because of his weak performance in minority and white liberal neighborhoods, however, but also because white voters living outside Manhattan turned out in large numbers and favored Giuliani. By mobilizing white Catholic and Jewish supporters and broadening his base just enough, Giuliani revitalized the conservative political alignment fashioned by Ed Koch in the 1980s.

Mayor Dinkins's term was marked by persistent inter-group conflict in Washington Heights, the Korean grocery boycott in East Flatbush, and the Crown Heights clash between blacks and Hasidic Jews. Viewing these events and the daily life of the city through the lens of a severe recession, the electorate concluded that the condition of the neighborhoods was worsening, the homeless, panhandlers, and squeegee men were threatening public spaces, and that the mayor was not handling these matters with the authority they wanted. Most of all, voters thought the city was growing more dangerous, and saw street crime as the major issue in the race. Although Dinkins had put thousands of new cops on the beat and could point to a lessening of the violent crime rate in recent years, the media relentlessly focused on the innocent kids felled by drive-by shootings or the death of a dedicated Red Hook school principal caught in a crossfire between drug dealers. In retrospect, the narrow margin of

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Dinkins's loss is a testament to the persistence of white liberalism in New York.

In the next four years, Mayor Giuliani faces a mirror image of the political challenge that confronted David Dinkins four years ago: how to bring into his fold new constituencies that have life situations and political outlooks different from and to some extent in conflict with those of his core supporters. Just as Dinkins needed to add moderate Jews and white Catholics to his black, Latino, and white liberal base, Giuliani needs to convince white liberals, Latinos, and even some conservative blacks to join his white ethnic base. *Daily News* columnist Jim Sleeper has argued in the *New Republic* (November 1, 1993) that mayors such as Giuliani, Ed Rendell of Philadelphia, or Richard Riordon of Los Angeles can form a "Rainbow II" coalition of whites, Asians, Latinos, and others on a platform of "commercial deregulation, better public safety, less onerous taxation, and tougher union contracts." In Giuliani's case, this will be much easier to say than do. Although renewed economic growth may help him, the city's fiscal difficulties will require actions that are sure to be unpopular with many whose support he needs. Moreover, he appears to be having difficulty convincing such people that he has their interests at heart and that he will construct an administration that includes them. Finally, since the Democrats are not likely to nominate a black candidate for mayor in 1997, Giuliani will not attract the level of Democratic defection that helped elect him in 1993.

If it will be hard for Giuliani to maintain the Koch coalition, it will be equally hard to rebuild a multiracial, multi-ethnic liberal coalition to oppose him. To understand why, we need to examine the reasons for the Dinkins administration's failure to consolidate and expand its electoral base. To some extent, Dinkins's failure was tactical. Even though his administration poured political capital and tax money into increasing the size of the police force, the electorate did not perceive the crime situation to be improving or credit Dinkins for his efforts. The mayor also seemed to be relying on an increased black electorate that never materialized. Despite these failings, however, Dinkins ran an extremely close race.

This near-win is cold comfort for those who would build a renewed liberal coalition. Curtis Chase, president of one of the city's most successful reform Democratic clubs, observed,

> The margin of the mayoral election was only as close as it was because a great many white Democrats voted for Dinkins with the most tightly gritted teeth imaginable . . . you don't have to be Jim Sleeper to recognize that liberalism is clearly not speaking to the white middle class, or the remnants of the white working class, or the burgeoning immigrant class . . . or even many of the Brownstone Bourgeoisie. (*The Citizen*, newsletter of the Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats, January 1994)

Race, of course, will continue to be a major source of difficulty for urban liberals. On the one hand, African Americans have historically been underrepresented in urban politics and still face discrimination in housing and the labor market. The struggle for black empowerment has been, and continues to be, a defining element in the democratization of American urban society. On the other hand, blacks in New York City and many other cities now have relatively high rates of registration and turnout, elect representatives in proportion to their population size, and are more likely to have public jobs than more rapidly growing minority groups such as Latinos, Asians, and other immigrants. In some non-trivial sense, blacks have become part of the political establishment. Other groups sometimes interpret blacks' attempt to consolidate and build on these gains as blocking their own advance.

This is particularly important because urban politics is less and less "politics in black and white." In cities where blacks became the majority of the electorate during or before the 1980s, descriptive representation is no longer the issue. Now, white minorities influence which of several competing black candidates will win office, as in the most recent Detroit mayoral election. Only in a few more cities are blacks likely to become a clear majority of the electorate in the next decade. In most cities without black majorities, immigration is mak-

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ing the population more diverse even as non-Hispanic whites become a numerical minority. Indeed, native-born blacks and their children may also make up a declining proportion of cities such as New York, Los Angeles, or Miami.

In such cities, multiracial liberal coalitions can succeed only by drawing on white liberals and Latinos, as well as African Americans. This cannot be done on a platform that appears to favor blacks over other groups. It also cannot be done when the electorate is polarized along racial lines, since blacks will regularly come up on the short side. Yet African Americans are the most reliably Democratic of any voting group and the largest single racial/ethnic component of the electorate in New York City. They must be a central building block in any multiracial liberal coalition.

The evolution of black political leadership will have a major impact on whether such a coalition can be fashioned in New York City. Just as Dinkins's election was the greatest achievement of his generation of black leaders, his defeat spells the end of its ability to shape events. With the possible exception of Charles Rangel, none of Dinkins's peers has the standing to win a mayoral election. Although many black political leaders of the baby-boom generation have great promise, none is well known across the city's black neighborhoods or can claim the allegiance of all their leaders. Only one, David Paterson, has run for citywide office, and his campaign did not achieve much visibility in 1993. It is doubtful that any of them could win the 40 percent of Democratic primary votes needed to avoid a runoff against other candidates. Even though African Americans might make up about a third of the Democratic primary electorate, no likely black candidate could count on winning all of that vote or of attracting wide support outside the black community.

Many black leaders are angry over Dinkins's defeat and are threatening to establish a third party that would punish white defectors. While this anger may abate, the Afrocentric feeling that feeds it will not. Despite the poor prospects for victory in the 1997 primary, a black candidate like Al Sharpton will probably run simply to claim the power inherent in a large if not decisive black vote. What other black leaders do in this case will be extremely important. If they unite behind such a candidacy, then the ultimate Democratic victor would inherit a deeply divided party. Alternatively, a black candidate running on racial appeals might make a deal with the ultimate victor, thereby burdening him or her with the perception of overly favoring blacks.

If a sufficient number of black leaders focus instead on how to construct a progressive alliance that crosses racial and ethnic boundaries, they will significantly enhance the prospects for a progressive Democratic victory. Black voters have repeatedly shown that they will not vote for candidates simply because they are black. If many black leaders endorse a non-black candidate in 1997, black support will be pivotal to that candidate's victory in the general election as well as the primary. But where will that candidate come from?

In descending order of size within the Democratic primary electorate, four constituencies might generate such a candidate: white Catholics, Latinos, white liberals, and Jews who do not identify themselves as liberals. Except for the liberals, who live in areas represented by reform clubs, these constituencies tend to be associated with the regular Democratic party organizations. Each will probably produce one or more candidates for the 1997 primary.

Although it is hard to tell who will prevail, it seems likely that the competition will come down to a Latino candidate and a white liberal. Though white Catholics are the largest group after blacks, with roughly 18 percent of the Democratic primary vote, they already favor Giuliani most heavily. The best-known Democrat from this background, City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, is also not likely to make the race. Jewish voters living outside Manhattan, at roughly 10 percent of the Democratic electorate, are its waning political establishment. The best-known politician from this background may be Alan Hevesi, recently

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elected comptroller, who is also not likely to risk this office in a bid for the mayoralty.

A Latino politician will certainly run. Though Latinos account for roughly 15 percent of the Democratic electorate, they are plagued by low turnout, little awareness of their own leaders, and a low regard for them. The most likely Latino candidate, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, will, however, draw well not only from Latinos but also from black, Catholic, and even Jewish regular Democrats. Whether the regular Democratic party organizations can provide support for him will be an interesting test of whether their oft-reported demise is in fact real.

With about 13 percent of the Democratic electorate, white liberals will provide his main competitors in the likely form of Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger and Public Advocate Mark Green, Jewish Manhattanites with firm progressive credentials. If both run, they will undermine each other. If they do not, and if the election is not polarized along racial lines, the long-standing Catholic/Jewish competition may reassert itself in the Democratic primary. Since the two groups are roughly evenly matched, black voters would then determine the outcome.

Those who would put together a progressive coalition of white liberal, other Jewish, and black voters, together with elements of the Latino and white Catholic population, thus have their work cut out. Unlike the regular Democrats, these groups lack a forum in which to negotiate their differences, strike bargains, and unite behind a single candidate. The Dinkins mayoralty never created a way or a place for backers like the public employee unions, the reform political clubs, community-based organizations, and black churches to meet regularly and interact on equal terms. Such bargaining as will occur is likely to be organized by potential candidates, and will thus be partial, secretive, and serial, rather than open and inclusive. The creation of a better forum should be high on the agenda for those who would forge a multiracial liberal coalition.

Proponents of such a coalition must also address the issues that deeply concern all voters, but especially middle-class white voters. Foremost among them is the perception that crime is rampant, the streets unsafe, inter-group relations uncivil, and the quality of life decaying. Dinkins attempted to address these issues without political success. The fate of Giuliani's mayoralty will depend to a considerable degree on how he deals with them. Since liberals do not think that Giuliani's approach—more jails and more arrests—will change the situation, it behooves them to develop proposals that might actually have an impact on crime and the fear of crime. They must find ways to employ the young men who commit most crimes, strengthen the ability of neighborhoods to control threatening behavior in public spaces, and minimize the risks of those who are now most exposed to criminal behavior.

Liberals must also acknowledge public dissatisfaction with government performance and the widespread view that people on the public payroll run government for their own benefit. Liberals find this difficult, because public employee unions and other groups supported by public money provide much of the funding, campaign workers, and other resources that advance the liberal Democratic cause. Yet if they are to restore legitimacy to the notion of positive government, they must find ways to make it more responsive to its customers—perhaps through further decentralization and greater accountability to local communities. As they work on such issues, those seeking to forge a new, transracial liberal coalition would do well to balance their reliance on public employee unions by also involving local voluntary organizations, churches, and block clubs.

New York and many other large cities are entering a critical period of their political development. They are moving beyond a politics of black and white into an environment in which forming a majority electoral coalition, much less a durable governing coalition, will be a far more complicated task. It is a period that desperately needs new vision, new leaders, and a thorough dialogue among the potential partners in the new liberal coalition. □

This essay is from the afterword to the new paperback edition of the author's *A Phoenix in Ashes*.

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George Scialabba

THE LADY AND THE LUFTMENSCH

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY: THE MARRIAGE OF DIANA AND LIONEL TRILLING, by Diana Trilling. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1993. 442 pp. $24.95.

A REBEL IN DEFENSE OF TRADITION: THE LIFE AND POLITICS OF DWIGHT MACDONALD, by Michael Wrezsin. Basic Books, 1994. 544 pp. $30.00.

Why do we still care about the New York Intellectuals? Partly, perhaps, because they embodied, conceivably for the last time in American history, a venerable modern ideal, practiced also by the *philosophes* and praised by Goethe and Marx: *vielseitigkeit* or many-sidedness. Their versatility was astonishing. "The intellectual," Irving Howe wrote in "This Age of Conformity" (1954), doubtless with his fellow New Yorkers in mind, "is a man who writes about subjects outside his field. He has no field." Their apparent mastery in pronouncing on both culture and politics, and in relating one set of judgments to the other, now seems as attractive as it does unattainable. In the Age of Information, mastery even of a single field is an implausible aspiration, and casual authority over a whole range of them an anachronistic one.

Then, too, their pronouncements seemed to matter. To the live moral imagination, all times are dark times; but the late thirties and early forties have a special pathos. Rarely can so many catastrophes—global economic depression, world war, the Gulag, the Holocaust—have thronged a single decade. The need to make sense of these traumas was widely felt; and with so many people listening, even those tough-minded erstwhile historical materialists may be forgiven for forgetting about the structural irrelevance of radical ideas in a capitalist democracy—or, to put it less theoretically, for taking themselves so seriously.

Certainly we have been a long time saying goodbye. In the twenty-five years since Howe wrote the first and best retrospective ("The New York Intellectuals," *Commentary*, October 1968), one after another of them, like the players in Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony, has come forward with a valedictory and then bowed off the stage or returned quietly—for the most part—to his or her seat: Mary McCarthy, Edmund Wilson, Howe himself, William Barrett, William Phillips (still fiddling away, but *rallentando*), Norman Podhoretz (likewise, *molto agitato*). Although by and large I can't get enough of the genre, I'm glad Phillip Rahv didn't weigh in—though a fine and underappreciated literary critic, he was apparently not good at personal relations and was particularly embittered late in life. My chief regret has always been the absence of memoirs by two of my favorite NYints, Dwight Macdonald and Lionel Trilling. A double pleasure, then, this publishing season: the first full biography of Macdonald and Diana Trilling's memoir of her life with Lionel.

Michael Wrezsin is a diligent, conscientious, fair-minded scholar and so has produced a well-informed, even-handed, thoroughly useful and enjoyable biography. Diana Trilling is a New York intellectual (*emerita*) and so might have been expected to produce either a brilliant, contentious, unreliable, and self-serving portrait of those fraught decades or (depending on where one's ideological sympathies lie) a brilliant, contentious, and illuminating one. She has confounded expectations. *The Beginning of the Journey* occasionally takes

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sides, settles scores, dips into mere brilliance. But in its novelistic proportions and detail and its sustained inwardness, it is what few of those "*Luftmenschen* of the mind" (Howe) achieved or even attempted: a work of art.

Diana Trilling's style has often seemed to me a bit fussy. A fine, tortuous line separates the exquisite from the precious. Lionel Trilling navigated that boundary expertly, almost infallibly. Unlike some readers of *The Beginning of the Journey*, I have no trouble believing that Mrs. Trilling in good measure formed her husband's prose style (see, for one example among several that make this claim plausible, her superb essay on Virginia Woolf in *Claremont Essays*). But the pupil undeniably—she of course does not deny it—surpassed his teacher. The enchanting combination of lightness and gravity that he regularly attained, she rarely attained.

In *The Beginning of the Journey* she attains something else: not quite a world but a milieu of lively, rounded, ridiculous, admirable characters, her family and Lionel's and their friends and colleagues during the first half of their marriage. (The memoir ends in 1950.) She herself is her own most memorable creation, or re-creation. "I was an excessively fearful child," she announces on page three, and offers a mind-boggling, side-splitting list of things she feared, above all burglars, for whom she lay awake listening night after night. Fear—especially "fear of public display," induced by parental strictures—is the hidden theme of this formidable woman's life. A gifted singer, she came down with a psychosomatic illness that foreclosed a musical career. As a beginning writer of anonymous short reviews for the *Nation*, she almost gave up in terror, aborting her career, when offered a byline. To this day, she is "unable to attend a concert or lecture or any public performance without at some moment having my throat tighten with the temptation to scream and thus divert, in a most unpleasant way, the attention of the audience from the onstage display to my own imprisoned self." They fucked her up, her Mum and Dad; they may not have meant to, but they did. Lionel's, too. She dramatizes it all marvelously, with impeccable moral delicacy and without a quaver of self-pity.

There are revelations—Lionel's rages and depressions, his blissful paternity, their lifelong financial difficulties, Diana's amazing misadventures in psychoanalysis. But most surprising and affecting of all is her voice: at once elegiac and pungent, magnanimous and unsparing, dignified and intensely, dauntingly intimate. Mrs. Trilling's intelligence was always plain on every page she wrote (though I will presently quarrel with her politics). But I never suspected she had so much soul.

There was, of course, never any doubt on that score about Dwight Macdonald, and there are fewer surprises in *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition*. He drank a lot, had a squeaky laugh, and drove recklessly; he was not the best of fathers; he occasionally—for example, when exercised by Rahv's or Phillips's subtleties—tossed off an anti-Semitic crack; and his late-life writer's block makes painful reading. But for the most part he was what he reads like, decency itself, universally liked even if not always (by truly serious people, that is) respected.

No major historical or interpretive novelties in Wrezsin, either, though a few nuggets. His versions of the 1949 Waldorf-Astoria Conference and Macdonald's stint at *Encounter* are full and entertaining. There are generous selections from Dwight's correspondence, most notably with Nicola Chiaromonte. And the NYints' summer frolics on Cape Cod are high comedy. But for all Wrezsin's thoroughness and judiciousness, Stephen Whitfield's much shorter *A Critical American* (1984) is still the best introduction (apart from Macdonald) to Macdonald.

Whatever they may have disagreed about (practically everything), the New York Intellectuals seem to have been virtually unanimous in regarding Macdonald with exasperated condescension. He was "Yogi Macdonald" (Rahv and Phillips), a "sentimental dilettante" (James Burnham), "Bohemian . . . irresponsible" (Sidney Hook), "the 13th disciple" (Howe), a "kibitzer . . . thinks with his typewriter" (Paul Goodman), "has made a fetish of confusion and drift" (C. Wright

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Mills), a "truant" (William Barrett), a "dandy" (Hilton Kramer), a "boyish innocent . . . singularly lacking in self-consciousness" (Diana Trilling, 1957); "Nothing was easier than to be angry at Macdonald, whether in or out of print, but it was difficult to stay angry at him; he was too childlike, too seemingly innocent. Certainly he was innocent of the consequences of his ideas" (Diana Trilling, 1993). Even Trotsky chimed in: "Everyone has the right to be stupid on occasion, but Comrade Macdonald abuses the privilege."

Can so many and diverse eminences have been wrong? I think so. Turgenev once observed that in politics, "the honorable man will end by not knowing where to live." He might have added that such a man's less brave and imaginative contemporaries will mock his homelessness. The thirties and forties (even more than the fifties, sixties, seventies, and eighties) confronted political critics with dilemmas to which one, perhaps the only, honest response was confusion and despair. Macdonald initially opposed American participation in World War II, believing that capitalist governments could not effectively prosecute the war without themselves veering toward fascism. His more dramatic predictions, at least, were mistaken and occasioned much sarcasm. But they proceeded from a sound intuition—that war is the health of the state—which his polemical opponents gave no evidence of sharing. This inchoate, global skepticism allowed Macdonald to perceive the Allies' criminal misconduct: the mass bombings of civilians, the insistence on unconditional surrender, the refusal of asylum to the Jews, and "the annihilation of all European underground movements against fascism and Nazism, which succeeded because it was one of the very few items on which the Allied powers wholeheartedly agreed . . . [and] for which only now are we beginning to pay the full price" (Hannah Arendt, "Introduction to *Politics Past*," 1968). It was Macdonald and his fellow contributors to *Politics* who documented and denounced all these things and so in a small way redeemed the honor of American intellectuals, not the *Partisan Review* "realists" (nor Diana Trilling, who in *The Beginning of the Journey* rebukes even the latter for their insufficient partisanship). The cold-war blueprint NSC 68, the existence of high-level State Department and Council on Foreign Relations planning groups that in effect designed the Pax Americana, and the evolution of huge, uncontrollable national security bureaucracies originating in this period also seem, in retrospect, to validate Macdonald's confused intuitions about the untrustworthiness of governments. At least one can say (adapting a celebrated formulation by Susan Sontag) that a reader of *Politics* probably would not have been surprised by these developments, while a reader of the post-Macdonald *Partisan Review* very well might.

Macdonald's "negativism" also earned him a good deal of superior admonition. In "The Root Is Man" (1946) and elsewhere, he confessed his disenchantment with all the available forms of organized political action. (That essay prompted a young wiseguy named Irving Howe to send *Politics* a 6,000-word [!] critique, which Macdonald published in full.) "What seems necessary," Macdonald wrote, after surveying in the preceding pages (and embracing in the previous decade) virtually every form of radical ideology, "is to encourage attitudes of disrespect, skepticism, ridicule towards the State and all authority, rather than to build up a competing authority." The only hope he could see, modest enough, "seems to be through symbolic individual actions, based on one person's insistence on his own values, and through the creation of small fraternal groups which will support such actions, keep alive a sense of our ultimate goals, and both act as a leavening in the dough of mass society and attract more and more of the alienated and frustrated members of that society."

It is difficult to understand why, except to the terminally tough-minded, any of this should have sounded frivolous, irresponsible, quietist, or defeatist. It's not as though there were practical alternatives, then or now. "Negativism" did not mean abandoning radical politics, just pruning it of empty pretensions and bad faith. It meant resisting the simplifying urgen-

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cies of war and cold war, admitting one's impotence and uncertainty, sitting tight, listening. It required moral poise, a kind of ideological negative capability. It required genuine—rather than professed, which is a very common article—intellectual humility. No wonder his fellow New York Intellectuals thought him wacky. (Others, however, saw his floundering differently. Czeslaw Milosz, for one, paid tribute to Macdonald as a successor to "Thoreau, Whitman, and Melville . . . a specific American type—the completely free man, capable of making decisions at all times and about all things strictly according to his personal moral judgments.")

And even at his most confused, discouraged, or doctrinaire, Macdonald *criticized*. He quotes Alexander Herzen on "two Russian liberals who made their peace with Czar Nicholas I: 'I shall be told that under the aegis of devotion to the Imperial power, the truth can be spoken more boldly. Why, then, did they not speak it?' So, too, with the critical supporters of the war—why, then, do they not criticize?" Actually, a similar question crossed my mind when I came upon Diana Trilling's remark in *The Beginning of the Journey* that after she and Lionel left a communist-front organization in disillusionment, "we never again raised our voices on behalf of the workers' homeland." Well and good. Macdonald himself was as sharp and effective a critic of Stalinism as anyone in the history of the American left. But did the Trillings ever again raise their voices on behalf of their homeland's workers? Not that I can discover. Whereas *Politics* was read fervently in army camps and union halls across the country, and frivolous, irresponsible Yogi Macdonald more or less single-handedly launched the War on Poverty with "Our Invisible Poor," his essay-review of Michael Harrington's *The Other America*. Altogether, Hook-Burnham-Rahv-Phillips-Kramer-Trilling disparaging Macdonald strikes me as no less implausible than, say, James Gould Cozzens ridiculing D.H. Lawrence or Mortimer J. Adler lecturing Wittgenstein.

(Having praised *The Beginning of the Journey*, I must here parenthesize to defend Macdonald against a more particular reproach in it. Mrs. Trilling writes: "In 1968, with the outbreak of the campus disturbances at Columbia, [Macdonald] was at once on the scene, loaded for bear. He had no connection with Columbia; to him it mattered not at all if the institution lived or died—he had found himself a revolution. . . . He and I quarreled during this period . . . he found my indignant refusal to help the SDS 'hilarious'—what more laughable than to want a university to endure?"

On the contrary, as an invited speaker at Columbia's counter-commencement, Macdonald told the strikers:

> While I find your strike and your sit-ins productive, I don't think these tactics can be used indefinitely without doing more damage than good to the university. It would be a pity if Columbia became another Latin American type of university in which education is impossible because student strikes and political disruptions have become chronic. Nor do I think that our universities should be degraded to service as entering wedges to pry open our society for the benefit of social revolution. I'm for such a revolution but I don't think it is a historical possibility in the foreseeable future in this country, and premature efforts to force it will merely damage or destroy such positive, progressive institutions as we have. Their only effect—if any—will be to stimulate a counterrevolution which will have far more chances of success.

These remarks probably contributed as much to Columbia's survival as anything Mrs. Trilling said or did in the spring of 1968.)

From the 1950s on, Macdonald mainly occupied himself with what he called (borrowing T.S. Eliot's definition of the function of criticism) "the correction of taste." He became, as Stephen Whitfield put it, mid-century America's Mencken as well as its Bourne, slaying various middlebrow dragons such as the pseudo-populist third edition of Webster's Dictionary, the vulgarized Revised Standard Version of the Bible, and the ineffably pompous University of Chicago Great Books project. He justified this flight from politics with an eloquent 1950 antimanifesto:

> The scale of things is too big, the levers of power too far removed from people like us (and perhaps

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from people like Stalin and Truman), the mood of the general population, after generations of Pavlovian conditioning by industrialism, world wars,and state bureaucracies, too demoralized and apathetic to respond to our appeals. Even if we could make them with the old fervor and rationality. Which we can't. For fervor we now have routine moralizing; for reason, the old stock of antiquated abstractions. . . . The pacifist and socialist writings of today are to those of two generations ago as hay is to grass. Which is why I am no longer a pacifist, a socialist, or any kind of ist.

But of course it was not really a flight from politics; it was a continuation of politics by other means. In the decades since Macdonald resigned as a revolutionist, systematic social theory, both liberal and radical, has lumbered around to an understanding of the strategic importance of mass culture and moral psychology; has begun to appreciate the ideological functions of cant, kitsch, crudity, and superficiality. Macdonald theorized a bit himself (his 1953 essay, "A Theory of Mass Culture," was fairly widely reprinted), but mostly he went in for practical criticism, with significant effects on American intellectual hygiene.

Eventually he took to calling himself a "conservative radical"—partly, one suspects, to pull everyone's leg, but also because the standards he sought to apply to our culture, the strict standards of honest intellectual craftmanship, are at once deeply conservative and deeply subversive. "To think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration," Orwell wrote in "Politics and the English Language," "so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers." Macdonald's career is an almost unimprovable gloss on Orwell's essay. □

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George M. Fredrickson

AN AMERICAN GIANT

W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919, by David Levering Lewis. Henry Holt, 1993. 735 pp. $35.

W.E.B. Du Bois was a titan among African-American intellectuals and the central figure in black protest politics during the first half of the twentieth century. His record of achievements during his long life (he lived to be ninety-five) is astonishing in its diversity and significance. He was the first black American to do graduate work in Europe, the first to earn a doctorate from Harvard (or any other American university), and the first historian, white or black, to publish in the prestigious Harvard Historical Studies. (Almost forty years after publication of *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America* in 1896, he produced his monumental *Black Reconstruction* [1935], a

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work that has come to be recognized as one of the classics of American historical writing.) His *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) was not only the first significant sociological study of an African-American community, but also the first extensive, empirically based social-scientific investigation of any American population group. He later firmed up his position as the pioneer of African-American sociology by directing the eighteen-volume Atlanta University Studies, which surveyed virtually all aspects of black life in the United States in the early twentieth century. His collection of essays *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) was of course a landmark in American and African-American thought and literature—as Henry James realized at the time, and as the efforts of recent scholars and critics to probe the depths of this extraordinarily rich and complex work have more than verified. His subsequent novels, essays, and autobiographies never quite duplicated the power and intensity of *Souls*, but they nevertheless solidified his preeminence as an African-American man of letters.

Turning from history, sociology, and literature to protest politics and propaganda, Du Bois became the principal instigator of the twentieth-century civil rights struggle, founding the Niagara Movement in 1905 and joining with a few white Progressives and other black radicals to organize the NAACP in 1909–10. As the editor of the association's organ the *Crisis* for the next twenty-five years, he gave voice to the two-sided black freedom struggle, the battle for equal rights in American society and the effort to develop a proud and distinctive African-American cultural identity. He became perhaps the most prominent black intellectual in the world when he played a central role in the founding of the Pan-African movement. A participant in the first Pan-African conference of 1900, he organized a series of such conferences in the 1920s and was present in London in 1945 when the Pan-African movement became the direct inspiration for the decolonization of Africa after World War II. But Du Bois's concept of liberation extended beyond race and nationality. First attracted to socialism by Eugene Debs and the American Socialist party of the first decade of the twentieth century, Du Bois began an extended love-hate relationship with white American radicalism. Although he had little difficulty in agreeing with the basic socialist argument that capitalism stood in the way of genuine human emancipation, Du Bois saw working-class white racism (manifested especially in the discrimination of unions against black workers) as an insuperable barrier to a black alliance with socialists and communists until the onset of the cold war convinced him that the Soviet Union was sincerely committed to the struggle against European imperialism and white supremacy, while the United States was working to sustain racist and colonialist domination throughout the world. After joining the Communist party in 1952, he became a prominent victim of McCarthyite persecution; he died in 1963 after emigrating to Ghana and in effect giving up on the domestic struggle for equal rights. At the beginning of his account of the first fifty years of Du Bois's life, David Levering Lewis describes with bittersweet irony the announcement of Du Bois's death at the March on Washington, an event that to many Americans signified the fruition of the struggle that he had instigated more than a half-century earlier but had recently abandoned.

Lewis's *W.E.B. Du Bois* is, incredible as it may seem, the first full-scale biographical treatment of any substantial segment of the life of this key figure in African-American history. Earlier one-volume biographies by Francis Broderick, Elliot Rudwick, and Manning Marable were too brief to do full justice to their subject. (The Broderick and Rudwick works also suffered from a lack of free access to Du Bois's papers.) Arnold Rampersad's *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* provided an excellent analysis of some of Du Bois's main ideas and how he expressed them but had no biographical pretensions. Lewis is the first scholar to make full use of the voluminous Du Bois papers, and he has apparently read everything Du Bois published that has survived, which according to my count includes twenty-three books, not including the Atlanta

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series, much of the contents of the *Crisis*, and, just for the period before 1919, dozens of other articles appearing in a range of periodicals.

Besides being as thorough and richly detailed as the subject demands, Lewis's account of Du Bois's first fifty years is beautifully written and thoroughly absorbing. As readers of Lewis's earlier books are well aware, he is a master stylist and a skilled storyteller. More successfully than almost anyone else I can think of, he has managed to bridge the gap between academic historical scholarship and popular narrative history. In this work, the personal and private Du Bois comes alive but not in such a way as to obscure the historical context within which he operated as a publicist and protest leader. A "life and times" rather than merely a chronicle of Du Bois's experiences, it treats fully and incisively the racist climate of opinion and the larger African-American response to it that conditioned almost everything that Du Bois thought and did.

The book also merits praise for its judiciousness and avoidance of constrictive partisanship. Neither hagiographic nor debunking, it combines sympathy for its subject with a recognition of his shortcomings and inconsistencies. Not an easy man to work with, be married to, or have as a father, Du Bois could be arrogant, abrasive, and inconsiderate of others. His political and social thought during the period covered here contained elitist and authoritarian elements hard to reconcile with the commitment to radical democracy that some historians have seen as the essence of his thinking throughout his career. Lewis finds that his early embrace of the late-Victorian view that race consciousness was the key to the progress of peoples and nations proved somewhat counterproductive once he had gone to battle against some of the manifestations of Caucasian race consciousness in the United States of the Jim Crow era. Lewis even finds instances when personal ambition for place or office influenced his public stances on controversial questions. (The most striking example was the notorious "Close Ranks" editorial in the *Crisis* in 1918 when Du Bois advised blacks to forgo all protest against racial injustice so that they could wholeheartedly support the war effort—this at a time when he was angling for a commission in the Army Intelligence Corps.) But Lewis leaves us in no doubt that this less-than-perfect human being was a profound thinker and an indispensable contributor to the cause of black liberation, not only in the United States but throughout the world.

The book is not entirely free of inaccuracies. The Albion Tourgée who is referred to as a "southern expatriate" or "southern renegade" was actually a white northerner who had gone south after the Civil War as a "carpetbagger" and had returned north after the fall of Reconstruction. This slip is worth mentioning because Tourgée was the single most conspicuous white supporter of the legal and political equality of African Americans in the last two decades of the nineteenth century; along with William Lloyd Garrison, he was honored as a white "friend of freedom" at the first meeting of Du Bois's Niagara Movement. As such, he deserves to be characterized accurately by historians of the African-American freedom struggle. There is also a misquotation from historian B. Joyce Ross, who described Du Bois's NAACP associate Joel Spingarn as a "non-economic liberal" (meaning that his liberalism did not extend to economic issues) rather than an "economic liberal," as Lewis has it. Finally, Lewis has Du Bois dining with his old Harvard professor William James in 1918, which would have been quite remarkable since the philosopher died in 1910. There may be other small errors that this reviewer lacked the knowledge to spot, but such mistakes are almost inevitable in a work of this size and scope; calling attention to them is not meant to raise serious doubts about the reliability of the work as a whole.

More than making up for such minor lapses is a wealth of new facts about Du Bois and many fresh insights into what made him tick. We learn, for example, that both he and his father were of illegitimate birth, and that the latter, whom Du Bois never actually met, lived on for many years after he had abandoned the family he had established through a bigamous marriage. Lewis believes that Du Bois's

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response to "the corrosive, humiliating part of [his] heritage" was "transcendence through ability, aplomb, and carefully calibrated amnesia." The forebear with whom he could most readily identify was his relatively affluent and aristocratic grandfather Alexander Du Bois. The teenage "Willie" traveled to New Bedford to visit his grandfather for the first time in 1883 and came away with a new sense of "what manners meant and how people of breeding behaved." He fondly recalled this encounter in the autobiography he wrote at the end of his life, contrasting his grandfather's dignified demeanor as he raised his wine glass to toast a friend with the crude "jokes and backslapping" of the maternal relatives who surrounded him at home in Great Barrington. Du Bois never lost the attachment to the elite side of his ancestry and its Victorian ideals of gentility that the encounter had awakened in him. Alexander later left him a small inheritance and became even more of a role model for his grandson when historical research revealed that he had been active in the black antislavery movement.

The hope that Du Bois nourished fitfully through most of his life that white Americans had the capacity to overcome their racial prejudices and treat blacks as equals may have been first aroused by the behavior of his high school principal, Frank Hosmer. Lewis shows that this bearer of the best traditions of New England abolitionism took his only black pupil under his wing, guiding his extracurricular reading and encouraging him, with no hesitation, to prepare for college. (One wonders what would have happened if Hosmer had been like the white teacher who squelched Malcolm X's youthful ambitions by contemptuously dismissing his aspiration to be a lawyer.)

After studying at Fisk on a fellowship provided by local Congregational churches, Du Bois went on to Harvard, where the racial snobbery he encountered was to some extent neutralized by the warm personal attentions of a very distinguished member of the faculty. Like Hosmer, William James treated him without apparent bias or condescension. But Lewis is skeptical of recent claims that James was a major intellectual influence as well as a friend. He argues quite persuasively that Du Bois's philosophical predilections were for post-Hegelian idealism rather than for the pragmatism that James was offering as an alternative. Lewis also sheds new light on Du Bois's experiences as a graduate student in Germany, showing that his failure to receive a doctorate was due to the rigid enforcement of a residence requirement.

Lewis has relatively little to add to our understanding of the substantive issues involved in the much-studied controversy between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington that came into the open in 1903. But he reveals for the first time the extent to which the disagreement was "professional and then bitterly personal before it became ideological." To simplify a tangled story, Washington offered Du Bois a position at Tuskegee, which the latter turned down, perhaps because he did not relish being in the shadow of the older and more famous figure. The job he most coveted was the position of superintendent of schools for the District of Columbia, a federal patronage position that Washington controlled. Du Bois solicited Washington's support and believed he had received it, only to feel betrayed when Washington backed another aspirant. The clash between Du Bois's desire for what was probably the top position a black could attain in American public education and Washington's belief that the best place for him was as an underling at Tuskegee bred deep personal animosity. Which is not to say that Du Bois's public disagreement with the Tuskegee model of black schooling as vocational training and his defense of a broad liberal education as essential to the development of black leadership were insincere. But Lewis does suggest that the quarrel might not have become so bitter and divisive if it not had been fueled by personal resentments on both sides.

Because the NAACP papers have long been available to scholars, the main outlines of Du Bois's activities in the association during its first decade are well known. But Lewis adds some details and enhances our understanding of the serious tensions that developed between the editor of the *Crisis* and the association's white leaders and financial supporters. The whites tended to have as their sole interest the removal

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of the legal barriers to equality under the law and at the ballot box that they believed had been accorded to African Americans by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Although he fully endorsed this aim, Du Bois also used the pages of the *Crisis* to encourage a cultural nationalism and Pan-Africanism that seemed to white progressives to promote tensions between the races rather than the harmonious relations they hoped to nurture between the white and black citizens of a unified nation. Mary White Ovington, the white social worker of abolitionist lineage who as an officer of the NAACP was normally supportive of Du Bois, reacted to the tendency of the *Crisis* to denounce whites in general by asking if the association was for Du Bois "a work for colored and white people to do together" (as she had supposed) "or a work of revolution for the colored people only." "For Du Bois," Lewis observes, "the relationship between the NAACP and *The Crisis* was governed by the otherwise repellent doctrine of separate but equal; and the subordination of the former to the latter if need be."

But Du Bois did not in fact anticipate the radical black nationalists of the 1960s by calling on African Americans to engage in some form of autonomous revolutionary action. Lewis interprets his basic views on American race relations as the advocacy of a middle position between separatists and assimilationists. He notes that the famous passage in *The Souls of Black Folk* describing the "double consciousness" of African Americans does not propose that blacks resolve the conflict between Africa and America by embracing one side or the other, despite the acute discomfort of having a dual identity at a time when most whites disparaged Africa and mocked the pretensions of blacks to be full-fledged Americans. On the contrary, he saw this tension as a permanent condition that could become a source of creativity and strength rather than a debilitating weakness. Lewis quotes in full what he takes to be Du Bois's prescription for the "robust" development of "the Negro self."

> He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world. He would not bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the door of opportunity closed roughly in his face.

Du Bois thus anticipated as early as 1903 the cultural pluralism of the 1920s and at least one version of the multiculturalism of our own time. To struggle for legal and political equality and against legally enforced segregation did not in his mind contradict the need to affirm and develop a positive African-American identity, as assimilationists claimed, but was an essential precondition for its full attainment. Nor was equality a goal so unlikely to be attained that blacks should give up on America and separate themselves completely from whites. Although most African-Americans have come to accept, at least implicitly, Du Bois's dual agenda of public equality and ethnic self-realization, no one since has put the case for a positive dualism—or benign hyphenization of "African-American"—as clearly and effectively.

The knowledge that Du Bois later became a Marxist and a communist has led some writers to read too much of his later socialist activism back into his thinking before 1919. Lewis does not make this error. He shows that Du Bois had some sympathy for the democratic socialism of Eugene Debs and was moving toward the conclusion that capitalism would eventually have to be superseded by a more humane social and economic system. As previously suggested, however, his acute awareness of white working-class racism and trade union discrimination prevented him from embracing the socialist movement. Unlike many socialists, he did not believe that racial equality had to be postponed until after the demise of capitalism or even that socialism would bring an end to racism—unless the egalitarian reforms that he believed possible in a democratic capitalist society had already been achieved. If he was a dualist on the question of African-American identity, he was also a dualist on the question of whether race or class was at the root of black inequality. For most blacks, as for other workers, class disadvantage was a reality, but the racism that added greatly to the misery of

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African Americans was a force in its own right and needed to be confronted directly. As a middle-class black fighting for the liberation of his people from the American racial caste system, the Du Bois of Lewis's biography saw the fight against segregation and discrimination as the first order of business. Only much later did he conclude that no real progress toward racial equality was possible without a social and economic revolution. The debate about who was right—the embittered old revolutionary or the relatively hopeful reformer so well captured in this splendid biography—continues to rage. □

Peter Mandler

A GREEK IN ROME

BLOOD, CLASS AND NOSTALGIA: ANGLO-AMERICAN IRONIES, by Christopher Hitchens. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1990. 398 pp. $22.95.

FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT: ESSAYS AND MINORITY REPORTS, by Christopher Hitchens. Verso, 1993. 353 pp. $27.95, cloth; $16.95, paper.

After Thatcher, after Reagan, after the cold war, what remains of the "special relationship" between Britain and America? There has always been less there than meets the eye. In the nineteenth century, a special feeling for the English was nurtured primarily by WASPs of good birth for whom it represented not only "blood" and "class" but the dirty secret of residual toryism, an Un-American Activity of the right wing never prosecuted by Congress. In contrast, most Americans had good reasons to hate the English, chiefly Irish reasons (at a time when the Irish were America's most vocal ethnic minority), republican reasons, and anti-imperial reasons.

In our own century, changes on both sides of the Atlantic have undermined the foundations of Anglophobia. Both WASPs and the Irish play a diminishing role in American public life. America is less militantly republican, Britain less imperial. But only in this last respect did sagging Anglophobia make way for a resurgent Anglophilia. Over the fifty years between the Spanish-American and Second World Wars, the grudging, halting but inexorable baton-pass of imperial responsibilities forged a new and special relationship between the British and American governing classes. In this phase it matters little that the American governors are called Roosevelt rather than Adams. The essential glue is no longer "blood" and "class" but NATO and the "national interest." It does help, though, that upper-class WASPs still buzz around the foreign policy hive and that non-WASPs can don Harris tweed and Burberry as dignified fig-leaves for the naked interest that lies beneath. The function of Anglophilia in the twentieth century is to lend that veneer of civilization and higher purpose to the dirty business of empire.

Harold Macmillan overdignified this function by describing it in public, around the time of Suez, as playing Greece to America's Rome: "The power has passed from us to Rome's equivalent . . . and we can at most aspire to civilize and occasionally to influence them." We are expected to imagine a silkily elegant philosopher standing at the elbow of the corpulent emperor, supplying him with the wisdom requisite for the smooth execution of his world-historical tasks. The main thrust of Christopher Hitchens's cultural history of the special relationship, *Blood, Class and Nostalgia*, is to remind us that Britain's position was hardly that of Greece to Rome. "It had always been *Rome* to America's—what?"—something even more gross, we have to suppose. So in this case the elegant philosopher is himself only a slimmed-down emperor, passing on the half-remembered bromides of his own Greeks.

What is most brilliant in Hitchens's pretty brilliant book is his ability to show how much and how foolishly the practitioners of power politics in our century have valued their British cultural attachés. Poets may not be our unacknowledged legislators, but they can still be awfully useful to our acknowledged ones. Kipling, for instance, played midwife to the American Empire by supplying Teddy Roosevelt with "The White Man's Burden"—subtitled "The United States and the Philippine Islands"—which conveniently found its way into the pages of the

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New York *Sun* the day before the Senate voted on annexation of the Philippines. Some further Kipling verses, even more hair-raising on the subject of imperial responsibility, appear to have been passed on to the next Roosevelt by Winston Churchill in October 1943, as part of his unsuccessful campaign to keep the British Empire together in the coming postwar settlement. And Churchill himself, having failed to salvage his empire, cemented a British role in the new one by supplying the rhetoric of the Iron Curtain and of the "English-speaking world" that stood against it. Churchill's lasting significance in American history has not been as a world leader but as a tutor in the language of leadership: "a mere thesaurus of quotations for 'standing tall,' " Hitchens calls him.

A further Anglo-American irony, of which Hitchens is no doubt all too aware: this is a very Greek book, supple, polished, emotional, convincing, a flashing gem of engaged contemporary history. Consequently, it has not been adequately recognized in our Modern Rome, suiting neither the popular market for history (too short, too clever, too few characters) nor the academic (no footnotes, no theory, too committed).

Hitchens's Greekness makes him, perhaps, not always the ideal commentator on American society taken as a whole. The Anglophilia that interests him has, after all, a very elevated but still limited constituency: it's been of more use in gluing the ruling caste together than in building a popular following. How meaningful could Kipling be to a democracy always composed overwhelmingly of non-WASPs, a people of whom even today only 10 percent so much as hold a passport? Clinton's Rhodes Scholarship has hardly proved a political asset. Similarly, I've always thought it interesting that James Baker wrote his undergraduate thesis on British foreign policy under Ernest Bevin, but he would hardly have advertised this on the campaign trail—as much because Bevin was a Brit as because he was a socialist. For public consumption, Baker had to speak a tougher language of cash and bombs. "American empire," Hitchens concedes with a note of disappointment, "tends to define itself in terms of strategic jargon rather than grand design and noble mission." Nor am I sure that the persistence of "Brit Kitsch"—Ralph Lauren's country-house style and Houston tract suburbs called Nottingham Oaks or Sherwood Forest—testifies to much more than the restlessness of postmodern consumer culture. In Southern California, would-be-tony tracts are called Rancho Miranda or Villa Hermosa.

The same strengths and weaknesses are evident in Hitchens's latest collection of essays—they are too good, too durable to be called journalism. On the insiders he is consistently sane and knowledgeable and, above all, highly readable. Victims of variable worthiness, ranging from George Will and P.J. O'Rourke to the neocons and Nixon, are all eviscerated with the same stylishness. Some of the epigrams deserve an entry in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. Reaganism is derided as a three-credit-card trick. The New World Order is an order imposed by the New World. Nixon's turgid memoirs demonstrate that the unlived life is not worth examining. And the sarcasm is rarely gratuitous; beneath it always lies a perceptible moral foundation. The catalogue of Kissinger's misdeeds left me shaking, whether with anger or pity I cannot say. Taken together, the political essays amount to nothing less than an alternative history of the Washington establishment, not so much inside as below the Beltway. One of his characteristically penetrating insights is that "conspiracy theory" is just the toxic by-product of dubious "official versions." Hitchens falls for neither.

Yet the question arises in these essays, as in *Blood, Class and Nostalgia*, whether challenging the official version is quite enough. At one point, while gently chiding Noam Chomsky for his pessimism, Hitchens points to the link between the "superpower delusions" of the establishment and the "provincial fear" of the American people. "The United States has an isolationist and insular *culture*, combined with a global and interventionist *posture*." This "highly dangerous and febrile mixture" creates all sorts of opportunities for scare-mongering and what Chomsky calls the "manufacture of

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consent," but it also—I am sure Hitchens is right in saying—makes the mass media "an area of contestation" for people like him, and us.

However, successful contestation of this kind requires not only an unmasking of "superpower delusions" but a coming to grips with "provincial fears"—either by stoking them up, as the far right is wont to do, or by meeting, diagnosing, and assuaging them. Hitchens has little taste for these latter tasks. As befits the author of the "Cultural Elite" column in *Vanity Fair*, he finds his natural constituency in "the educated, the skeptical and the ironic: the only class (precisely because it isn't a class) in whose defense I myself feel willing to be snobbish." Fair enough—you don't write for any of his favored outlets (including *Dissent*) expecting to reach the uneducated and the credulous. Still, neither can you chart an alternative political course without some grasp of, some measure of sympathy for American democracy. Hitchens hates all the modern devices aimed at plumbing public opinion--polls (which of course he uses when they suit him), talk-shows, new forms of politics like Perotism. On the few occasions when he lowers his own dipstick into Middle America, it comes up cloudy, not to say greasy. Though he says ritually that the voters aren't stupid, he also says that Perot owes his support to "the elitism of fools"—essentially his diagnosis of Nixon and Reagan—so there appear to be an awful lot of foolish yet not stupid people out there. Rumor has it that this thinly veiled contempt has lost a few more of its veils in his recent appearances on cable television.

It's not that Hitchens is incapable of fellow feeling with ordinary people. He displays it movingly in a report from Sarajevo, and on the road to Timisoara. He has the decency to defend the Swedes' civic and social virtues. I liked very much his celebration of political renewal in Hungary, even though this means in the short term the alliance of the left with neoliberals and neocons. He quotes Laszlo Rajk—"In the end, I'd rather be comrades with people I trust but don't agree with entirely—we can argue—than with people to whom I'm ideologically close but can't trust"—and concludes: "Not for the first or the last time in history, the right people have the wrong line. At least that can change." What refreshing patience! But the cheerful respect accorded people in Bosnia, Romania, and Hungary rarely gets extended to Americans, who have had the misfortune to retain some control over their own destinies.

As I worked my way through these essays, I began to get a picture of Christopher Hitchens as a late-nineteenth-century radical-liberal, powered by the high-octane fuel of the Enlightenment—freethought, science, atheism, universalism and internationalism, hatred of ignorance and tyranny—yet also aware of the social question, the new injustices of mass society. It came as no surprise to find, at the end of the volume, that George Eliot has a place in his pantheon. Like Eliot, Hitchens suspects that the subjects of mass society will be no better masters. And yet . . . the ancien regime is *so* rotten; it must fall. □

David Glenn

UNQUIET FEMINISM

No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays, by Ellen Willis. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan/University Press of New England, 1993. 298 pp. $22.95.

Ellen Willis fits a certain stereotype of the post-1960s radical. Out of feminist principle she has renounced marriage. She opposes the war on drugs and writes unrepentantly about the acid trips of her youth. She's a New Yorker, she's Jewish, and she's written essays for the *Village Voice* calling for the abolition of the nuclear family. She is, in other words, the type of specimen Patrick Buchanan and Dan Quayle might have wanted to cage and put on display at the Republican national convention in Houston.

But for all her dedication to cultural radicalism, Willis—who over the years has been on staff at the *New Yorker, Ms., Rolling Stone*, and the *Village Voice*—is no zealot. Nor

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is she, to say the least, a wide-eyed celebrant of all things leftist. Most of the more recent essays in her new collection *No More Nice Girls* attack entrenched patterns of myopia and arrogance among contemporary liberals and leftists. She defends freedom of speech against antipornography feminists and against leftists who hedge their defense of Salman Rushdie with pious regret for his alleged "blasphemy." She exposes the timidity at the heart of left communitarianism. And she argues that cultural nationalism and identity politics give rise "to a logic that chokes off radicalism."

The tone here may ring familiar; there's no scarcity of writers who flaunt their disillusionment with the left. But where Eugene Genovese seems curdled and Camille Paglia unhinged, Willis is consistently bracing, intelligent, and radical. At their best, her essays embody a powerful and attractive democratic leftist sensibility. She champions freedom and individualism without ever embracing a vacuous libertarianism. Her essays are relentlessly skeptical, yet she never abandons the utopian impulse. And she is committed to solidaristic political action and endlessly critical of liberalism's limitations, without once succumbing to any of the various *anti*liberalisms—Leninist, communitarian, nihilist—that have plagued the twentieth-century left.

Although *No More Nice Girls* addresses topics as various as Picasso, terrorism, and the space program, it is radical feminism (of a particular 1969 New York vintage) that lies at the heart of the book. A core assumption here is that a rebellion against the structures and practices of male supremacy is as necessary as ever. Liberal campaigns against sex discrimination in education and employment are necessary and fine, but they don't speak to psychocultural dimensions of sexism—the deeper bigotries that foster eating disorders, domestic violence, and "the sexual shame and self-hatred endemic to [women's] condition."

This sort of radical feminist analysis is usually framed in terms of one of two classically American narratives. The moralistic narrative, which Willis rejects, presents sexism as a sort of Original Sin and feminism as a redemptive force. Willis's feminism, by contrast, is libertarian—she yearns not so much for a *just* society as a *free* one. With the barriers of sex roles shaken, she argues, all of us would be far more likely to reimagine and reinvent institutions such as the family and the workplace, and to redefine society around such principles as pleasure and self-expression.

If redefining society around pleasure and self-expression sounds like the call of a fuzzy-minded relic, take heart. To her great credit, Willis rarely hesitates to scrutinize the contradictions in her own political project. In *No More Nice Girls'* most impressive essay, a meditation on "excess" titled "Coming Down Again," Willis draws on painfully concrete memories to examine the problems of the recent cultural left. It's a story of paradox: feminism has spawned both expansiveness and despair. During the peak of feminism's second wave, Willis recalls,

> feminism intensified my utopian sexual imagina-

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> tion, made me desperate to get what I really wanted, not "after the revolution" but *now*—even as it intensified my skepticism, chilling me with awareness of how deeply relations between the sexes were corrupted and, ultimately, calling into question the very nature of my images of desire.

"History and its convolutions" are the repeated theme of this essay: a burst of utopian energy is followed by an unexpected wave of fear or despair. Drug experiences slide from transcendence to addiction; AIDS and economic stagnation dramatically change the terrain on which fights over sexual freedom and the family are fought; in the heat of political struggles, idealism and conviction curdle into guilt, shame, and moralism.

The crucial question is how to interpret these setbacks: are they predictable hurdles, symptoms of the stress of cultural systems in conflict? Or are they proof of conservatives' nay-saying arguments against cultural radicalism? Willis, of course, argues for the former. As she puts it elsewhere: "If we really hope to change our condition, there's no escape from the admittedly risky, admittedly arrogant project of reimagining the world."

This willingness to soldier forth with a utopian vision—an intellectual habit distrusted by postmodernists—has great strengths. Consider Willis's dissection of Judith Wallerstein's famous mid-1980s studies of the lives of children after divorce, which purported to show that family break-ups are far more destructive than popularly believed. After zinging Wallerstein for methodological sloppiness (she used no control group of children in intact families), Willis leads her essay into contentious territory. She considers the narrow field of debate in which Wallerstein's studies were constructed and received, and notes its limits. Wallerstein's data expose genuine pain, of course—the pain of children and adults struggling to find a balance of connectedness and autonomy within family structures, both "intact" and "broken," that have been radically transformed in the last thirty years. For Willis, Wallerstein's response to this pain (a vague call for stronger social pressures against divorce) is typical of liberals—it's "hand-wringing," myopic, and "trivial."

By contrast, she argues, "Conservatives, as usual, have a coherent, if quixotic . . . position on this issue: Restore the social centrality of marriage by reversing the trends toward personal freedom and sexual equality that have undermined it." The duty of radicals is to grasp as accurately as the cultural right the deep structural effects of feminism's rise. Now that women have won certain kinds of social freedom, the traditional nuclear family, which was always rife with contradiction, is genuinely unstable, "a dying beast." Feminists and other cultural radicals must have the courage to construct new alternatives to the family, new ways "to love, to rear children, to find community in a postfamilial world." To retreat from this challenge would be a failure of nerve.

A phrase like "postfamilial world" may reek of 1970s earnestness, but much of Willis's approach toward sexuality and feminism has an earlier source: Wilhelm Reich's radical interpretation of Freud, in which sexual liberation is deemed necessary to save civilization from its self-destructive neuroses. Sometimes Willis's Reich-flavored analysis leads her toward interesting observations about the connections between eros and our political life. Her long, theoretical exposition of castration anxiety and how the nuclear family transmits sexism and repression, however, is unconvincing and a little tedious; Willis's thought is better served when she draws less deeply and explicitly from Reich. Still, it's clear that Freud and Reich have broadened and disciplined Willis's thinking over the years.

One wishes that Willis would wrestle more thoroughly with the tensions between her Freudian inheritance and her faith in the possibility of a radically democratic society. At one point, arguing against the central assumption of identity politics, she sharply asks: "If our [ethnic or gender] experience by definition makes whole areas of our political judgment suspect, on what moral basis can we act?" Since phrases like "gratuitous denial" and "the nation's repressed guilt" appear on virtually every page here, we might turn the question

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around: if so much of our behavior is really governed by unconscious impulses and repressed desires, doesn't *that* render "whole areas of our political judgment suspect"? Exploration of this question needn't, of course, lead to neoconservative Freudians' conclusions; it's a shame that Willis avoids the problem.

I find some of Willis's particular skepticisms disquieting. At a public forum in 1992 she called the vocabulary of socialism "bankrupt," and in a recent essay she predicts that the next great upsurge of the *left*, not the right, will be the force that finally extinguishes the libertarian energies of the 1960s. How do these dour assertions square with the many passages in which Willis expresses a commitment to class-egalitarian politics? It never becomes quite clear. Willis usually explores her ambivalences fearlessly—that's one of her great strengths—but on the Socialist Question she remains oblique.

This obliqueness means that Willis answers certain questions thinly or not at all. Accepting her premise that all truly radical movements must center around the principle of freedom, how might radicals discourage the American habit of conflating love of freedom with love of the unfettered market? Is full employment an appropriate goal for a libertarian left? How does class prejudice intersect with the scars of male supremacy in the lives of working-class women? Since so much of this book is devoted to criticisms of the left and to the imagining of alternative lefts ("Instead of beating our breasts, we might take our cue from pleasure-loving radicals like Emma Goldman"), it's startling to see how little sustained attention is giving to questions of class.

This complaint might seem symptomatic of a habit Willis despises: the left's frequent dismissal of feminism as "merely an extension of liberal individualism" and as "a movement of, by, and for white, middle-class women." But my aim here is not to trivialize sexism or to "re-center" class—just to give it a seat at the table. As Willis often notes, the explosions of the 1960s were in many ways bound up with the expanding economy and perceptions of an end to scarcity. What are the prospects for an unleashing of radical energy today, in the age of the temporary worker and the *maquiladora*? It's impossible to answer this question well without considering economic questions more thoroughly than Willis does here. □

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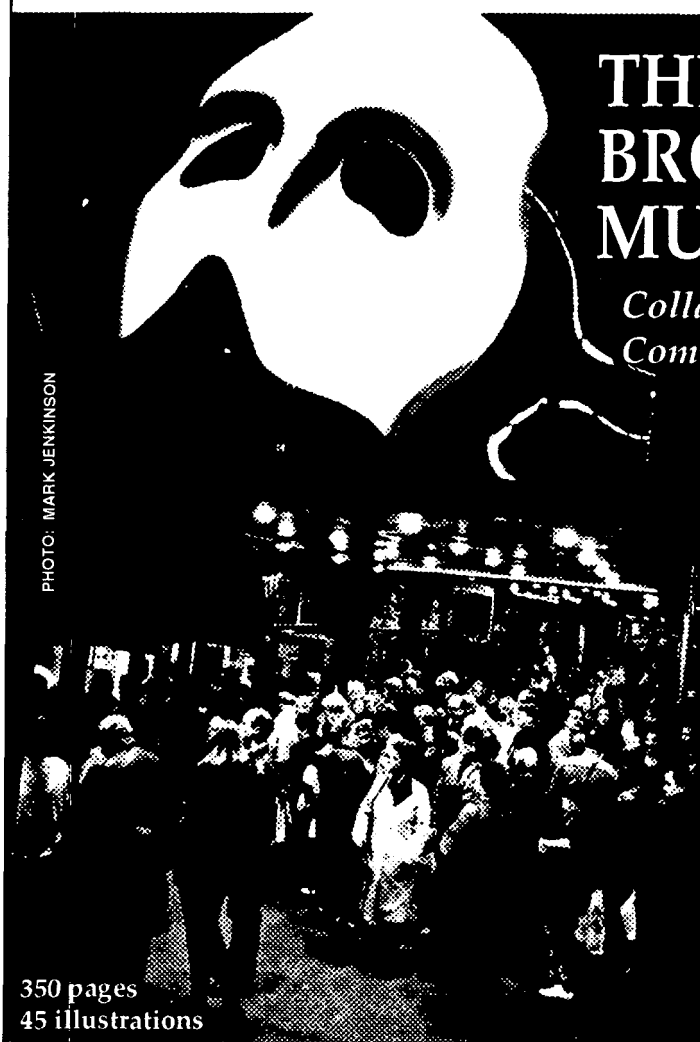

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Misunderstood Sartre

Editors:

Richard Wolin's review of *Past Imperfect* by Tony Judt (*Dissent*, Summer 1993) recycles a misrepresentation of Sartre by Judt and many others. The claim is that Sartre and *Les Temps modernes* equivocated in the face of the revelation of Russian slave labor camps in the early fifties. Wolin tells us Sartre asked, " 'Why should they embarrass us?' " because "Sartre elected to view them as an excrescence that in no way threatened the essence of communism or the Soviet system." The context in which Sartre's question appeared, however, supports no such interpretation. It is worth quoting a substantial segment of the passage in question because it presents a very different Sartre than the one demonized by many American cold warriors. The sentence Wolin quotes appeared in Sartre's 1952 "Reply to Albert Camus" (translated in *Situations*, George Braziller, Inc., 1965) as part of the famous feud between the two resulting from Francis Jeanson's critique in *Les Temps modernes* of Camus's critique of Marxism in *The Rebel*. Here he addresses Camus's claim that *Les Temps modernes* had been silent on the camps.

> We devoted an editorial to the camps, as well as several articles, which committed me entirely. . . . The existence of these camps might enrage us, horrify us, we might be obsessed by them, but why *should it embarrass us?* Have I ever retreated when it was a matter of saying what I thought of the Communist attitude? And if I am a submarine, a crypto, a shamefaced sympathizer, why is it that they hate me and not you?
> . . . Yes, Camus, like you, I find these camps inadmissible, but equally inadmissible is the use which the so-called bourgeois press makes of them every day. . . . What must provoke indignation and perhaps despair is the idea that a socialist government, supported by an army of bureaucrats, could systematically have reduced men to slavery. But *that*, Camus, could not affect an anti-Communist *who already believed that the Soviet Union is capable of anything*. The only emotion which these facts aroused in him—and it pains me to say it—is *joy*. Joy because he finally had his *proof*, and now we shall really see something! . . . If we opened our mouths to protest against some extortion [by the West], they would close it for us on the hour with: "And what about the camps?" . . . It was then that I began to find them despicable, those blackmailers. For, to my way of thinking, the shame of the camps puts us all on trial—you as well as me, and all the others. The Iron Curtain is only a mirror, where each half of the world reflects the other. Each turn of the screw *here* corresponds to a twist *there*, and both here and there, to finish, we are all both the screwers and the screwed. An American freeze, which is translated by an outburst of witch-hunting, provokes a Russian freeze, which perhaps will be translated by intensifying arms production and increasing the number of slave laborers. . . . (pp. 63–5)

DONALD LAZERE
San Luis Obispo, Calif. □

Richard Wolin Replies:

With all due respect to Donald Lazere's desire to set the record straight, I hardly think the long citation from Sartre's 1952 polemic with Camus redounds to the credit of his argument.

First, Lazere would like to deny that Sartre "equivocated" with regard to the political import of the Soviet slave labor camps in the early fifties. But "equivocate" is precisely what Sartre did. Certainly *Les Temps modernes* ran articles (e.g., by Claude Lefort) as early as 1948 that were critical of the inhuman conditions in the land of "really existing socialism." This no one can—or does—dispute.

Nor can one dispute the fact that, at the time, Sartre himself in no way shared this critical position. As Sartre scholar Ronald Aronson points out with reference to Sartre's 1952 *The Communists and Peace*: "Sartre's systematic justification of the PCF was undisturbed by any note of criticism." In other words, in the early 1950s, an appreciation of the nature of the camps played a negligible role in Sartre's understanding of contemporary political reality: the failures of Soviet communism, the ultimate doctrinal inadequacies of Marxism, the Stalinism of the PCF, and so forth—which is precisely the point I strove to make in my review.

Moreover, when confronted in the famous interview on the occasion of his seventieth birthday with the fact that, in retrospect, it was Lefort's position on Soviet communism, and not Sartre's, that had been historically borne out, Sartre could only offer the following pathetic response: "Today their ideas [those of Lefort et al.] may appear to be more correct than the ones I formulated in 1952, but they weren't then, because their position was a false one."

Nor do Sartre's relativizing remarks (as cited in conclusion by Lazere) to the effect that the implacable hostility of the West bears essential responsibility for the

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totalitarian excesses of the Soviet system wash very well in historical retrospect.

In conclusion, I should only like to add: one cannot afford to leave good arguments concerning the debilities of communist rule in the hands of one's ideological opponents—in this case, in the hands of cold warriors and virulent anticommunists; a perspective that *Dissent* has, to its credit, consistently emphasized throughout the years. □

Left Out

Editors:

"The Left After Forty Years" (Winter 1994) is an interesting symposium. But perhaps it reveals as much by what it omits as by what its contributors say. Allow me two brief reflections.

First, the symposium is notable for something reminiscent of the intellectual climate during the 1950s: American society, its politics, economics, and even culture as the proper and inevitable norm for everyone, everywhere, and perhaps forever. In time, this myopia will pass, but I fear we will all have paid a heavy price for it.

Second, for a journal that takes pride in four decades of resistance to Stalinism and a strong claim on democratic inclusiveness, there is a stunning absence of New Left or anarcho-syndicalist traditions expressed here. The contributors write as if nationalization or denationalization were the only possibilities. Much of Eastern Europe, which yesterday threw out Stalinism's bureaucratic thugs, today is busy throwing out the International Monetary Fund's political toadies and is none too happy with the "free market" swindlers and exploiters who have taken over economic initiative from the communists. If we fear the return of regressive nationalism, we should cheer the progress of independent working-class groups like Russia's KAS-KOR. Not only does it offer the labor movement hope, but it also serves as a bulwark against the new wave of government-directed repression in Russia. (*Dissent* readers may wish to keep up or simply to support KAS-KOR by subscribing to the *Russian Labor Review*, PO Box 8461, Berkeley, CA 94707.)

Above all, let us make clear that *someone* in the West still affirms the right to revolution—asserted by Thomas Jefferson among others—as a fundamental element of democracy. The factory and university occupations of the 1960s and 1970s, the spectacular rise of Polish Solidarity, all the efforts at direct democracy remain alive in memory. Let them live again!

PAUL BUHLE
Providence, R.I. □

Owning It All

Editors:

David Brody's useful historical perspective on the labor movement ("The Future of the Labor Movement in Historical Perspective," Winter 1994) fails to raise the stakes high enough. He asserts that labor "cannot be opposed to reforms that make for better systems of work," and he argues also that working people have a proper call on the profits of a company. But it seems that his concept of a proper call on profits amounts to little more than a demand for higher wages.

Why is it that the labor movement has always found it difficult to ask for such benefits as profit-sharing and stock ownership, as if these were Wall Street schemes that unions should shun? If labor unions are going to help managements improve their work systems, why shouldn't they ask for a share of the ownership and, as the United Steelworkers has just done, seats on the board of directors?

Someone who has worked long years for a company should be able to retire and live off the dividends of the stock that he or she has accumulated over the years. Is there something anti-labor in this scenario? Is it the position of labor that stock ownership is tainted or that by getting shares in the company employees are giving up their independence? What nonsense.

MILTON MOSKOWITZ
Mill Valley, Calif. □

Correction

Edward Rice-Maximin (Winter 1994) is not now nor does he ever plan to be Eric. We apologize for the copy-editing mistake.—EDS.

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The Last Page

Like most New Yorkers I know, I regularly give to panhandlers. How much depends on how much change I have in my pocket, but my rule of thumb is a twenty-five-cent minimum.

If West Side Cares, a new food-for-voucher program in my neighborhood has its way, I won't be doling out quarters any more. Instead, I'll be passing out twenty-five-cent vouchers that can be redeemed at local stores. The idea comes from a similar program in Berkeley, California, and its aim is to make sure the city's panhandlers don't use the money they get for booze or drugs. That's a reasonable fear, given the times we are living in, but all the same the food-for-voucher program is one I'd like to scrap. I see it as part of a nineties-style toughmindedness that emphasizes the small picture at the expense of the big one.

To me the new toughmindedness is epitomized by the concept of "defining down" that has been embraced as the latest wisdom by so many urban policy makers and pundits. The phrase is Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's, and it comes from an essay, "Defining Deviancy Down," that he wrote in the *American Scholar* last year. Moynihan's point is that deviancy has become so widespread in America that rather than face up to it, we have defined it down. We have lowered our threshhold for what we call normal in order to cope with the problems created by single-parent families, crime, and mental illness.

Senator Moynihan's argument is appealing. We don't have an effective way of dealing with the problems he cites. But I also think that in a larger sense his fears are misplaced. For more than a decade, the most serous defining down we have been doing has been of our expectations. Labor Secretary Robert Reich summed up the kind of defining down I have in mind when he recently wrote, "There used to be an unwritten contract in America between top managers and workers: If you did your job conscientiously, you could count on having that job as long as the company stayed in business. But that implicit contract is being abandoned, at an ever-faster pace. Even reasonably healthy companies are cutting their payrolls."

Defining panhandling down certainly doesn't rank with defining down the right to keep a job or the right to an affordable college education. Nonetheless, it is the kind of lowering of expectations we don't need these days. In the name of a Puritanism that can't work—Does anyone think a food voucher is going to stop a drug habit?—it only makes life harder for the poor.

I cannot imagine anyone I know going into a store, buying a roll of food vouchers, then carefully putting them aside for ready distribution when the occasion should arise. But most of all, I cannot imagine any of the men or women I regularly see panhandling saving up their vouchers, walking into a grocery store, and counting them back out in front of a watchful clerk.

Key to any successful panhandling encounter is that it be quick and anonymous. When it happens, it does so in an instant. Then both parties are free to move along. Food-for-vouchers does the opposite. It defines panhandling down by extending the burden of it. A panhandler never gets the chance to walk away and for a moment just be someone with a little extra change.

NICOLAUS MILLS □

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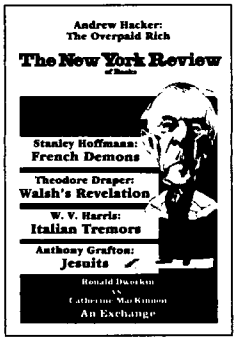

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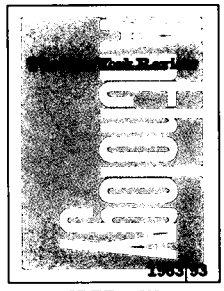

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